

2
REPUBLICS ESTABLISHED

AND

3
THRONES OVERTURNED

BY THE

BIBLE.

BY JOHN[✓] CROWELL,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, WEST CHESTER, PA.

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JOHN T. LANGE, 24 S. SECOND STREET.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE Scriptures recognise the right of every established government to the obedience of the people who live under it. This right is conferred, not by the people, but by God himself. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves condemnation."*

These precepts have their place in an inspired and systematic exhibition of Christian doctrine. With reference to obedience

* Rom. xiii. 1—7.

unto established governments, they are as authoritative as is the doctrine of justification by faith with reference to the way of salvation. They do not require *passive* obedience, but such as has its limits and its laws. The word of God supplies a clear light by which the limits may be defined and the laws studied.

The government existing when these precepts were enjoined upon Christians was a monarchy—a despotism. It had extended its dominions by conquest, crushing other governments, or absorbing them in its own. It was exercised not by the good and gentle, but by a tyrant; not by Trajan, but by Nero. Yet do the laws of Christianity proclaim that such a government is clothed with lawful authority by God himself, and that resistance to *that* is rebellion against him.

From these positive commands to obey a MONARCHY, when established as the government "*de facto*," the inference has been boldly drawn that God approves and appoints mo-

narchy as "*de jure*" the form of government for mankind.

This inference has acquired increased plausibility, from the fact that the governments existing during the whole period with which Scripture history is conversant were, with few exceptions, monarchies; consequently the Bible refers to and records many of the actions of kings. Patriarchs, prophets, apostles, even Christ himself, were called before them, addressed them as such, acknowledged their authority, and submitted to it. The Saviour stood before the Imperial governor as before one to whom power from above had been given. The apostle of the Gentiles appealed unto Cæsar's judgment-seat as the supreme earthly tribunal "where he *ought* to be judged." Indeed the whole Bible has something regal in its tone, caused by its familiarity with the governments of kings.

Thus it has the more easily happened that the doctrine of the divine right of kings, maintained *as if* taught in the Bible, has

contributed in no small degree and with no transient influence to the stability of their thrones. While their persons have been rendered splendid by gems and purple, and secure by the locked array of armed men, they have attained *sacredness* also by the awful words—"EX DEI GRATIA."

In opposition to this doctrine, whether boldly avowed or secretly held, we maintain the following simple, yet positive proposition:

THE FORMS OF HUMAN GOVERNMENT WHICH GOD HAS INSTITUTED HAVE BEEN REPUBLICAN; MONARCHIES ARE THE WORK OF MEN.

The proof of this proposition is to be sought,

- I. IN THE CIVIL GOVERNMENT OF THE ISRAELITES.
- II. IN THE PRIMITIVE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.
- III. IN THE INSTITUTIONS, RELIGIOUS AND CIVIL, WHICH HAVE RESULTED FROM THE REFORMATION OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

PART I.

THE CIVIL GOVERNMENT INSTITUTED BY DIVINE
AUTHORITY IN THE LAND OF PALESTINE.

CHAPTER I.

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT OF THE EARLY CONDITION OF
MANKIND.

THE Scriptures give a remarkable account of the human race as they were first spread abroad after the flood. "*They journeyed;*" "*they found;*" "*they dwelt;*" "*they said one to another;*" "*Let us make us a name;*" "*the children of men;*" "*the people is one;*" "*they have all one language;*" "*this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do.*"* Here is

* Gen. xi. 1—9.

a description of democratic independence, union, and energy; and, because these qualities were unrestrained by law, of violence also.

God broke up this vast democracy into pieces, by confounding their language. The fragments, however, were democratic still. No king was divinely appointed over them. After their division, the people are described as scattered abroad in *tribes*, according to their descent. From this point in their history, individuals among the mass began to usurp power as they could. Nimrod is specified as the leader in that mode of acquiring greatness, which soon became general, and has continued so to the present hour. The proverb—"As Nimrod the mighty hunter in the face of Jehovah,"*—which then had its origin in the rapid imitation of his example, has not yet become obsolete or obscure.

* Gen. x. 8—10.

CHAPTER II.

GOVERNMENT OVER THE HEBREWS UNTIL THE DEATH
OF MOSES.

ABRAHAM was called forth by the voice of God from the midst of spreading idolatry and rising monarchy. This was the starting point of that Divine plan, for the benefit of mankind, which has ever since been in progress, and whose consummation is yet to be witnessed. It was designed to affect the religious and civil condition of the whole world. "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." This promise included both a spiritual and a temporal blessing—the one of supreme, the other of subordinate yet vast importance. Our attention is often directed to the former; let us now confine it to the latter.

Abraham and his immediate descendants governed their families; they were not yet a *nation*. The deliverance from Egypt having been at the appointed time achieved, a national government became necessary. It was appointed by God himself, consequently we are greatly interested in ascertaining what that government was. We must look for it, not in the wilderness, but in the promised land. From Egypt to Canaan the arrangements adopted were chiefly temporary and preparatory.

Viewed as preparatory, however, they indicate the nature of the government to be established. The people were delivered as a *nation*, not as the subjects of any monarch. The mass, and every man in that mass, was brought to view.

They had a leader of God's appointment, and clothed with great authority so far as God supported him, but utterly defenceless so far as human power was concerned. He had no lictors—no bodyguard. They were

not *his army*; but he was *their leader*. In the exercise of their democratic will they threatened to tear him in pieces, or to make themselves a captain and march away. His authority and power in these and all emergencies depended entirely upon God. A rod was his only weapon; a pillar of cloud and fire his only shield.

Even the great authority which God gave him was only temporary. It bore the same relation to the government of the Hebrews afterwards established as the authority of Washington during the revolution bore to the American government. That ended when Washington resigned his commission, so the authority vested in Moses was destined to end when Israel should have gained possession of Canaan.

Let us mark here the providence of God. Moses was not permitted to enter the land. We have often contemplated this prohibition as a punishment for his sin. Let us now re-

gard it as throwing light upon the institutions of the Hebrews.

By the death of Moses, a successor to his high office was rendered necessary. Who was appointed? The *oldest son* of Moses? *Any* of his sons? No: but one from a different tribe. We are informed that Moses had sons; that his first born had been regularly initiated into the congregation and consequently was not ineligible to office; and that at Sinai they had rejoined their father. From that point they make no figure at all in the narrative. They were raised to no office; they were endowed with no privilege on account of their relationship to the leader of the people. They are never again mentioned or alluded to in the subsequent history until the time of David, when it is recorded that their descendants continued among the Levites, the lower grade of the priesthood to which they were destined by their birth. Thus it is clear that the family of Moses inherited from him no political rank whatever.

And as after the lapse of many generations we are able to trace the influence of hereditary succession in human governments and over human affairs; as we know the oppression it has caused, the torrents of blood it has shed, the agency and foreknowledge of God in the case of Moses' sons are as clear as the noon-day.

CHAPTER III.

THE HEBREW COMMONWEALTH IN PALESTINE.

JOSHUA was appointed the successor of Moses by God himself.* The transfer of authority was solemnly made by Divine command in the presence of all the people. Under him possession of Palestine was secured.

It is at this period, we affirm, that God appointed for the Hebrews republican institutions; and we proceed to make the affirmation good by considering

1. The Division of the Land.
2. The Establishment of Religion.
3. The Administration of the Laws.

* Deut. xxxi.

SECTION I.

THE DIVISION OF THE LAND.

ACCORDING to Divine commandment the land was apportioned by lot to *each tribe—to each family—to each individual*. By this arrangement alone, republican institutions were secured.

For in order to understand the effect on the government and laws, of this tenure of land by all the people “in fee simple,” (simple so far as men are concerned,) we have only to place it side by side with “the feudal system” introduced into modern Europe by the northern nations.

The foundation of that system (as is well known) was this—“Large districts of the conquered territory were allotted by the conquering general to the superior officers of the army, and by them dealt out again in smaller parcels to the inferior officers and most deserving soldiers. These allotments were

called '*feoda*'—'fees'—i. e. 'a *conditional* stipend or reward.' The condition annexed to them was that the possessor should do service faithfully both at home and in the wars, to him by whom they were given; for which purpose he took the oath of fealty, and in case of the breach of this condition and oath, by not performing the stipulated service or by deserting the lord in battle, the lands were again to revert to him who granted them."*

This one principle bound all the people to one man as their sovereign lord and king; thus establishing a royal government of the greatest possible vigour and permanence.

The feudal system was adopted in other countries besides those into which it was introduced by actual conquest. "Most if not all the princes of Europe thought it necessary to enter into the same or a similar plan. For whereas before, the possessions of their subjects were wholly independent and held of no superior at all, now they parcelled out

* Blackstone, b. 2, ch. 4, § 45.

their royal territories, or persuaded their subjects *to surrender up and retake their own landed property under the like feudal obligations of military fealty.* And thus in the compass of a very few years, the feudal constitution, or the doctrine of tenure, extended itself all over the Western world.”*

As the introduction of the system into conquered countries built up monarchical institutions of a solid and rigorous nature, so its voluntary adoption produced similar results in strengthening existing kings, and in altering the whole fabric of institutions and laws. “The alteration of landed property in so very material a point, necessarily drew after it an alteration of laws and customs, so that the feudal laws soon drove out the Roman, which had hitherto universally obtained, but now became for many centuries lost and forgotten, and Italy itself, *‘belluinas atque ferinas immanesque Longobardorum leges accepit.’*”*

* Blackstone.

The whole effect of the feudal system was witnessed in England, where it was introduced by William the Conqueror, partly by bestowing the forfeited lands of the English who had fallen in battle upon his Norman followers, and partly by persuading his English subjects to “*submit their lands* to the yoke of military tenure, to become his vassals, and do homage to his person.” “In consequence of this change, it became a fundamental maxim and necessary principle of English tenures, (though in reality a mere fiction,) that the king is the universal lord and original proprietor of all the lands in his kingdom, and that no man doth or can possess any part of it, but what has mediately or immediately been derived as a gift from him to be held upon feudal services. For this being the case in pure, original proper feuds, other nations who adopted this system were obliged to act upon the same supposition, as a substraction and foundation of their new polity, though the fact was indeed far

otherwise." Thus were introduced "not only the rigorous doctrines which prevailed in the dutchy of Normandy, but also such fruits and dependencies, such hardships and services, as were never known to other nations; as if the English had in fact, as well as theory, owed every thing they had to the bounty of their sovereign lord."*

As a result of the same system, even at this day, the whole structure of English liberty retains the appearance either of violence, as if the people had wrested from the king a portion of his prerogative; or of vassalage, as if on their bended knee they had received from him a royal boon; whereas all that they have acquired, either by force or favour, is only the recovery of what was originally their own.

Thus it appears from this historical view, (which has been intentionally given chiefly in well-known and authoritative language,) that the condition of servitude attached to

* Blackstone.

the tenure of landed property necessarily and invariably involved rigorous subjection to the will of a monarch, and turned all laws and customs into chains. Therefore, by parity of reasoning, we conclude that the "*allodial tenure*" of landed property wholly independent of any human superior, as necessarily involved exemption from human kingly rule. The possessor of the land was, so far as it and his own person were concerned, a sovereign on his own domain. He was subject to God, because from him he held both his own being and the land on which he stood. But with reference to his own conduct and interest he was independent of *men*. Where *all* the people enjoyed this allodial tenure, they were all, as individuals, independent of other men, and as they were connected together in a common country, with mutual and interlocked interests, a "*res publica*,"—a "common wealth" necessarily existed.

To apply this to the case before us. If, upon the conquest of Canaan, Joshua, as the

conquering general, had apportioned the land as a grant from himself to his superior officers, and they to the inferior officers and soldiers, a government of king, lords, and commons would have been established. Had this division been made by Divine command, then the king and his nobles would have reigned "by Divine right."

But as, on the contrary, the land was divided among all the people, as the common gift of God to all, the foundation of republican institutions was thereby laid. Had Joshua devised this plan, he would have been entitled to high praise for wisdom and equity, and the Hebrew republic, however worthy of imitation, would have been of human institution. But the plan of division was as directly from God as the land to be divided was his gift. All the persons to be intrusted with making the division He had appointed by name before the conquest, and on republican principles—one from each tribe, together with Joshua, the civil ruler, and Eleazar, the high

priest. He had directed the division to be by lot, "the whole disposing of which was of himself." It is therefore clear that the foundation of the Hebrew republic was laid by Divine appointment.

We have only to add, that by the restriction imposed on the sale or forfeiture of landed property, so that it should return every half century to its original possessors, and on the marriage of daughters so that their inheritance should continue in their own tribe, the Divine will was clearly proclaimed that these institutions should continue permanent through future generations.

SECTION II.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RELIGION.

THE republican nature of Hebrew institutions further appears from the adoption of religion by the voice of the people.

We certainly do not maintain that the

consent of men is necessary to the authority of God over them. On the contrary, his absolute sovereignty is a necessary inference from their entire dependence. His right to their service and worship is independent alike of their consent or refusal. But he desires only voluntary service. Therefore his right to demand it implies the right of men to yield it. His right to prescribe religion implies their right to adopt it. No human authority can impose it on them.

God gave his law to the Hebrews. The evidence that it was from him was addressed to them all. Thus proved, it was binding upon them; but the question whether they would receive it was between them and God. The adoption of it must be their own voluntary act. No earthly power could force it on them. Accordingly, after their settlement in Canaan, this question was solemnly submitted to them in a public assembly. The whole proceedings are recorded in the last chapter of Joshua. We are accustomed to regard

them as the narrative concerning an important religious duty:—they also record the exercise of a high civil privilege by a free people. They prove that all human authority to impose religious observances was disclaimed, and the right of every man to choose for himself recognised—*Choose ye whom ye will serve ; as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.* This choice the people deliberately made, saying, **THE LORD OUR GOD WILL WE SERVE, AND HIS VOICE WILL WE OBEY.**

Thus was a covenant entered into between God and the people, by virtue of which the law given by him, and adopted by them, became the established religion of the land.

SECTION III.

THE REPUBLICAN ADMINISTRATION OF THE LAWS.

THE office which Moses and Joshua successively held, though dictatorial in some respects, was, as has been said above, only

temporary. At length Joshua died. How marked the difference between the close of his official career and that of Moses!

Moses had gathered together the people, announced to them his approaching death, and solemnly transferred his authority to Joshua in the presence of them all. The transfer made by Divine command was publicly confirmed by the symbol of the Divine presence. But, in the case of Joshua, nothing of the kind occurred. No successor was inducted, nominated, or provided. When the old man died his office expired, and the next page of the history opens in this remarkable manner: "After the death of Joshua, the children of Israel asked the Lord, 'Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites.'" They stood before God a nation without an earthly head, exercising their sovereignty in subjection only to him.

Yet they were not without provision for the administration of the laws. At a very early period after the departure from Egypt,

Moses had "chosen from all Israel able men, who feared God and hated covetousness, to be rulers over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens." Their office was to judge the people at all times when any matter arose between man and man; making them know the statutes and laws. The smaller causes they decided themselves, the harder they referred to Moses.

Here was the outline of that system of ascending courts which is so prominent and indispensable in the United States, and in which is lodged so much of the government that is exercised over all the people "at all times." And the qualifications which Moses required are the very ones which the experience of all ages since has demanded. Let the judges among us, or any people where liberty is guarantied by the laws, be ABLE men, HATING COVETOUSNESS, AND FEARING GOD, and we are as safe as we can be on earth. Let them be destitute of these qualifications, or of any one of them, (it matters

little which one,) and the choice of anarchy or despotism is before us. This reference to our own country is made not so much for the sake of sounding a warning, (which yet might be useful if it could be heard,) as for throwing the light of our institutions on those of the Hebrews. Since among us so adequate a provision is made for the usual purposes of internal government, by the general establishment of legal tribunals, we may understand the nature and value of the similar provision made by Moses.

These magistrates appear to have been continued among the people. For in their assembly called by Joshua, to which reference has been already made, their elders, heads, officers, and judges were present. And, at a later period, "the governors of Israel"—the "men of laws"—rallied around Deborah. As there was no hereditary succession, it is probable the people in some way exercised their choice in their appointment.

A supreme officer over all the land, who

also was a judge to *execute* the laws, not a king to *will* them, was appointed from time to time by God himself. His providence fitted him for the crisis; His command called him to the post. This appointment appears to have been reserved as the prerogative of God, and would probably have been yielded to the people at a subsequent period, if they had shown themselves capable of exercising it wisely.

In estimating the practical operation of these popular institutions, we are to remember that the experiment was entirely novel. The people had emerged from a state of bondage only one generation before. During that period they had been subjected to constant and effective discipline, and were thus partially qualified for their untried task. Yet were they destitute of that practical experience, without which theoretical instruction is utterly inadequate. Consequently commotion, and strife, and violence were to be expected at the outset. These are part of

the first cost which must be paid for liberty. Even at the beginning, the advantages overbalanced the evils;—the periods of tranquillity were longer than those of violence and misrule.

But the experiment in its progress was marred by the growing corruption of the people. Liberty degenerated into licentiousness, until at length every man doing that which was right in his own eyes, the whole country was involved in war by the violence of a single mob.

CHAPTER IV.

THE OVERTHROW OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

WE have now briefly to trace the overthrow of these divinely appointed institutions by the hand of the people themselves.

They first wished to confer hereditary royalty upon Gideon because of his military success. "Rule thou over us, both thou and thy son and thy son's son also, for thou hast delivered us from Midian." Gideon refused. "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son: the Lord shall rule over you." Abimelech seized the royal power, according to the biting sarcasm of Jotham, that when the olive, the fig, and the vine had successively declined being king over the trees, the bramble took them under his royal shadow. He was slain

in battle, and thus the introduction of royalty was postponed.

The revolution was accomplished in the old age of Samuel, who, after his own spotless administration, committed the grievous error of making his sons judges in his stead; thus introducing the principle of hereditary succession, at the same time that he appointed wicked men. Seizing the pretext offered by their misrule, the people demanded a kingly government. The result is full of instruction. Samuel was displeased and disposed to resist. He however referred the application to God, the Sovereign over that and all governments. Mark the decision. "*Hearken unto the voice of the people: yet protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.*"

The voice of the people is to prevail. They have had the right conferred upon them of choosing their own form of government. If they are unwise or even wicked in their choice, there is yet no right of resisting it by

force vested anywhere on earth. A solemn protest is "the last argument" to which a republican ruler or a minority ought to resort. That entered by Samuel graphically describes the transition from republican to monarchical institutions. Personal liberty is sacrificed. The security of the family circle is invaded. The rights of property are trampled under foot. Independence becomes vassalage, *as if* the king had been the original grantor of every blessing.

We are often called upon to consider what would have been the result on the religion of the world if the Hebrews had remained true to their mission. God gave them his law and placed them in the centre of the known world, that the nations might behold the light and finally come to it. But they themselves fell into the idolatry of the nations, instead of maintaining that system which distinguished them from all, and the maintenance of which was the chief design of all the restrictions and peculiarities im-

posed on them. Thus God's purpose to make them a blessing to the Gentiles was interfered with and delayed.

We are now as forcibly taught what might have been the influence exerted on the *civil* institutions of other nations had the Hebrews maintained their own. Their light also would have shone upon the monarchies which clustered around Palestine—as the spectators of an amphitheatre around the stage—and the results produced by American institutions in causing monarchs to tremble even on their distant thrones might have been witnessed at that early day. But, instead of maintaining at all hazards their republican singularity until the nations became like them, they insisted on having a king that they “might be like the nations.” Thus with their own hand they hurled to the dust that divinely kindled torch of which they had been chosen the first bearers.

Henceforward the government over them was essentially royal until the remnant of the

nation was scattered by the Romans,—a period of 1200 years.

During that period the Eastern empires rose, flourished, and were overturned; the popular institutions of Greece struggled into existence, shone with splendid but transient lustre, and sank in the empire of Philip and Alexander; the kings of Rome reigned and were expelled; the struggle between the people and the nobles (essentially royal, since they had derived their privileges from the kings) went on to the advantage of the former for a time, but ended at length in the empire of Augustus, which, beginning about the birth of Christ, was universal over the principal countries of the known world.

PART II.

THE REPUBLICANISM OF THE PRIMITIVE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

CHAPTER I.

THE DEMOCRATIC TENDENCIES OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST.

WHEN the apparent failure of the *first* experiment in establishing republican institutions was complete, the fulness of time had arrived for commencing the *second*. How was it to be attempted? Not by clearing Palestine or any other land of its inhabitants, that there might be room for the erection of new institutions; not by overthrowing any existing government, that the fabric might rise

amidst its ruins. But as in the former experiment a republican civil government had been established with religious institutions chosen separately from it by the people—now, while the existing civil government was not disturbed, republican *religious* institutions were silently planted.

This was accomplished by the introduction of the gospel, which, while its highest design is the spiritual and eternal welfare of men, necessarily also affects their condition in this life.

The civil and religious institutions of a nation have ever included the two great classes of causes by which its destiny is moulded. Consequently they are the two great elements in the problem which kings, rulers and statesmen have to solve, and which students of history seek to understand.

Putting out of view the effect of the gospel upon the eternal welfare of men, our present inquiry is into its influence on their civil condition.

SECTION I.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE TRUTH THAT IN RELIGIOUS MATTERS THE
PEOPLE ARE INDEPENDENT OF THE CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

JESUS CHRIST appeared on earth as a Divine teacher, in the midst of a despotism exercising power over both civil and religious affairs. Their authority over the former he did not oppose, with it he did not meddle except to declare that they at least who acknowledged it and partook of the advantages it conferred should respect it. "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's."

But their claim of authority in religious things he utterly disregarded, as having no foundation except in assumption maintained by force. He did not go to the civil authority for permission or privilege, but gathered the people around him as a right which he and they alike possessed. He selected the messengers to proclaim his religion, and sent them into all the world to speak unto every creature.

Thus he asserted their independence—with respect to religion—of all civil government, whether despotic or liberal. *Power* to restrict and silence them he knew existed, and would be abundantly exerted, even unto taking their lives. Of this he warned them. He placed no sword in their hand, but on the contrary strictly forbade their taking it. Flight and argument and suffering and Divine Providence, were the only resources allowed them against even the wildest fury of absolute power. But the *right* of the civil government to restrict them, the Saviour utterly denied. They were to go forth everywhere in obedience to his command as their Sovereign Lord in religious things, and so far independent of men.

This principle was at utter variance with the theory and practice of mankind at the time it was laid down. The Saviour himself was the only being on earth who then understood it; it has had to contend with the whole force of human power, amidst torrents of

blood; and is not yet thoroughly understood or allowed. But so far as it has prevailed, the boasted liberality of modern times consists in receiving as morally right and philosophically true that which was proclaimed and written at the beginning as the starting point of the gospel in the world.

SECTION II.

POPULAR MOVEMENT PRODUCED BY THE GOSPEL.

THE Saviour went about among the people. In every city and town and district of Palestine, He gathered them around him, addressing his teaching mainly to them. He directed his disciples to pursue the same course, and to address not kings as such, or rulers, or nobles, or literary men, or privileged orders of any kind, but the human race, and every individual included in it. While he designed to reach all, He began not at the highest, but

the lowest. "To the poor was the gospel preached." As he who would kindle a fire places his spark beneath the fuel, not upon its summit, so Christ, having "come to send fire on the earth," kindled it in the substratum of society.

His mission and doctrine were pre-eminently adapted to reach and arouse the individual man—man as such; as possessing in himself an essential importance, whatever his condition and wherever the bounds of his habitation had been assigned.

JESUS CHRIST THE SON OF GOD HAD BECOME MAN—had taken his station, not among kings and nobles, but in a low condition. His humiliation, while it was especially designed to make him "perfect" in bringing many unto eternal glory, also secured his efficiency in lifting up the heads in this life of the lowly and the oppressed. What consideration could be so adapted to thrill the bosom of man, to awaken his faculties, to brace his spirit? Placed in the midst of the

works of God, he may well ask, What is man? And the answer cannot fail to assure him of an importance that belongs to him in the judgment and by the gift of his Creator, who, amidst such glorious handiwork, has been mindful of *him*, consulting his pleasure, providing for his wants, making him capable of "considering the heavens" with thought profound, and assigning him "dominion over all the earth." But when, in the prison-house into whose depths the lordly ones of his race had thrust him, and where he was slumbering in his chains beneath the pressure of military power, the Son of God stood by his side, clothed in feeble flesh like his own, and not ashamed to call him brother; then did he rise up quickly, the chains fell from his hands, the iron gate opened before him, and he went forth in his strength. His spirit was stirred within him by the mighty truth, that to a nature which had been thus taken by his Creator upon himself, there belonged a dignity which no external grandeur could

confer, and no transient poverty or oppression take away.

THE SAVIOUR APPEALED TO THE CONSCIENCE OF MAN as the pre-eminent endowment of his nature, which should bend to no human authority, quail before no human power, and be subdued by no degree or continuance of suffering. A being who has such a faculty conferred upon him, involving such a difficult and solemn mission, must possess an individual importance of which he cannot rightfully be deprived. If that faculty be appealed to, and that mission urged upon him, he must soon perceive his importance: if his conscience be obeyed and his duty performed, his personal importance will be asserted and maintained.

JESUS CHRIST REVEALED A JUDGMENT TO COME, at which every man must appear; at which every man must render an account of himself to God: he who had sinned in comparative ignorance to be held without excuse, so far as he knew or might have known his

duty; and he who had enjoyed clear light to have the more required of him, and to be visited, if a transgressor, with heavier condemnation. Both small and great, the poor and the rich, the feeble and the mighty, the bond and the free, must stand together at that day. A being who is on his way to such a judgment-seat, for whose trial the great white throne will be set in heaven, has, whether he be clothed in rags or in purple, whether he wear a yoke on his neck or a crown on his head, an individual importance that cannot be alienated or lost. He who is to be called to a personal account amidst the innumerable myriads that will surround the judgment-throne, cannot be destitute of claim to consideration upon earth because he is only one of a mass. He who will have justice done him at the bar of God, must not be oppressed or wronged by king, or magistrate, or master here.

And—most marvellous of the truths proclaimed by the gospel—JESUS CHRIST BY

THE GRACE OF GOD TASTED DEATH FOR EVERY MAN, and thus became the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, through whom the offer of pardon for offences against God was procured for every creature. By receiving the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness thus offered, any one of the human race, according to the announcement made, would acquire the privileges of a son of God. Though still, as a creature, subject to vanity in common with all mankind, the hope of deliverance was at once planted in his breast. Henceforth, his earnest expectation stood with extended foot and outstretched neck waiting for the liberty of the sons of God; as one, whom a besieging army has reduced to extremity, stands upon the tower, unsubdued, undismayed, intently watching the standard of his deliverer as it gleams on the mountain height. Nor could his expectation be put to shame. The manifestation for which he looked would be made, either partially in this world, or gloriously in

the next. Thus he was raised in spirit above the power of oppression, and while patiently enduring wrong, was acquiring a strength which rendered the infliction of wrong hazardous to the oppressor.

ANY ONE WHO DELIBERATELY RISKS HIS LIFE, for any purpose and from any motive, wins a degree of importance which must be felt. When, in its early history, Rome was besieged by a victorious army, a young man resolved to attempt the life of its leader at the risk of his own. Having killed one whom he mistook for the king, he was called to account. He lamented his ignorance of the royal person; held his right hand in the flame until it was consumed, and informed the king that three hundred young men at Rome had like himself resolved to risk their lives in taking his. Porsenna thought himself more than able to encounter all Rome, so long as they acted on the ordinary principles of human nature; but three hundred young men, who had made up their minds to die,

he did not dare to encounter, and consequently he proposed terms for an immediate peace.

So is it everywhere and in all circumstances where life is deliberately and intelligently risked, whether in war or peace—by the mighty or the weak—by man or woman. They who do it, often when every thing else is against them, exalt themselves to notice upon the pinnacle of success, or, if they fall, leave behind them an influence which may be felt by distant nations and to the latest times. When the founder of the Christian religion was lifted up upon the cross, he secured the gathering of all men unto him: and when his disciples counted not their lives dear to them, refused not death if they could be fairly proved to have deserved it, and shrank not from it if arbitrary power chose to inflict it, then was individual character brought prominently to view. Its rights were vindicated at the moment when most trampled on; when it was weak, then it became

strong; and when it sank in death, the perpetuity of its influence was secured.

The gospel actually produced the movement among the people which its principles were so well adapted to arouse.

Wherever Jesus Christ went, multitudes crowded around him. His fame spread abroad, awakening, arousing, stimulating the people. They who received not his teaching concerning the life to come, were greatly excited with hope concerning this life. They desired to make him their king. They went forth to meet him, crying, "Blessed is the King of Israel." They who held the people in subjection trembled for their power, and said to each other—"Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold the world is gone after him."

After his ascension, when his disciples proclaimed the gospel, the multitude were astonished and excited with intense emotion. Jerusalem was filled with the doctrine. The Senate of Israel were in great perplexity,

unable to foresee what would be the result of the movement, at a loss what to do in order to arrest it, and afraid to resort to violence lest the people should rise in their strength against them.

When the heralds of the gospel were driven out of Jerusalem, they went everywhere proclaiming it, and everywhere it produced the same stirring up of the people. They who received it, hailed it with joy; they who rejected it, violently opposed it: both kinds of treatment were the counterparts of the popular movement which we seek to trace.

Mental activity was stimulated by the assemblage of the people to hear the new doctrine; by the miracles wrought openly to attest it; by daily examination of the written evidence adduced for it; by public discussion, and by judicial trials.

Sometimes the people with one accord gave heed; sometimes they were divided; sometimes they made an assault upon the speakers. At one place opposition was excited by grave

men and honourable women; at another, wretches of the baser sort gathered the mob and set the city in an uproar. In one city, craftsmen, alarmed for the profits of their trade, assembled together shouting, "Great is Diana;" in another, national prejudice, indignant at the intrusion of foreigners and furious at the progress of the new system, burst into a tempest before which the Roman guard faltered, retreated to their castle, and saved the prisoner intrusted to them by a secret midnight march.

The proclaimers of the gospel were accused of troubling cities, of fomenting treason, of turning the world upside down. They were brought before magistrates of all grades, and stood even at the Imperial throne. Some of these officers wisely concluded to let them alone; some with stern rebuke drove their accusers from the tribunal; some courted bribes from the one party and popularity from the other: some treated the prisoners kindly; others threatened them, beat them,

shut them up in prison, and put them to violent deaths.

In no place did the gospel fail to attract notice and stir up popular activity. Starting from the meanest town of a despised land, it became powerful by the number of its adherents in the most splendid cities of Asia. Entering Europe at the outskirts of a city, and being first spoken there to women, it startled the Greeks as the trumpet blast of their own criers; called into exercise their logic, their wisdom, their curiosity; forced the Epicurean and the Stoic into strange alliance, and crowded Mars' Hill with a brilliant array of excited intellect around a barbarian babbler.

The gospel was silently introduced into Rome, probably by some of the strangers from that city who had been at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

The number of converts rapidly increased, chiefly from the humbler classes, but including some also of high rank. They soon attracted the notice of the civil power, and were spoken

of in distant cities as converts to the new religion. A similar result was witnessed throughout the empire. In cities, towns, villages and country districts, vast numbers of Christians were soon found. In the concise phrase of an historian* whose language is always to be assigned its utmost force, there was of them "ingens multitudo." According to the turgid eloquence of an apologist,† the wings of whose flight always need clipping, "If the numerous host of Christians had retired from the empire into some remote region, the loss of so many men would have left a hideous gap and inflicted a shameful scar on the government. It would have stood aghast at its desolation and been struck dumb at the silence and horror of nature, as if the whole world had departed."

This multitude were linked together as one people. They spake of themselves as "We," and were described by others as "They," the "Christians," the "Nazarenes," the "Atheists."

* Tacitus.

† Tertullian.

Thus they became a *people* in the midst of an *empire*.

Scattered abroad everywhere, they pressed with a constant force against the imperial authority. In matters purely civil their religion directed them to obey the emperor. "Ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake."* But the pagan religion was so interwoven with the state, that it was impossible for any man to renounce the one without often disobeying the other. In domestic arrangements, in amusements, in daily labour, in the camp, the forum and the senate, the national religion, clothed with the authority of law, asserted its jurisdiction. Consequently Christians were compelled to disobey the laws in proportion as they obeyed their conscience and God. From their refusal to adorn their doors with evergreens, to their denial of divine honours to the emperor, their action with respect to religion was a continued course of rebellion. And as

* Rom. xiii. 5.

rebellion against any law, however unimportant in itself, is an attack against the sovereign authority, if not subdued it weakens that authority and tends to overturn it. A rebellion that acquired so many adherents, that extended to all matters of religion, and that no lenity could allure, no rage subdue, must at last have caused the destruction of the empire, if an unlooked-for movement had not arrested the process.

Long ago, we are told, the dead body of a noble lady was buried, and a tomb of solid masonry erected over it. But living seed were, somehow, lodged in the soil, from which seven trees sprang up, making their way through the crevices of the tomb, and, by their constant, expanding energy, forcing apart the cement, clamps, and blocks of marble, until the whole was shaken:—then with their branches they embraced the fragments, bound them together, and prevented for a time their fall. So when freedom was buried at Rome, and the emperors were rearing the massive struc-

ture of despotism over the grave, the good seed of the kingdom of heaven was widely diffused, from which sprang trees of religious liberty, not seven in number, nor seventy times seven, but innumerable. They insinuated themselves into every aperture, and, growing with irrepressible energy, forced asunder cement and clamps and marble, until the vast fabric tottered in every part; then their widespread branches, intertwining themselves among the fragments, bound them together, and delayed their fall.

CHAPTER II.

THE ORGANIZATION OF REPUBLICAN CHURCHES.

THE democracy which the gospel aroused, it organized into republics.

Here we assert that every primitive Christian church was a republic; and proceed to establish the vitally important proposition, by showing the republican characteristics, first, of the churches; secondly, of their officers.

SECTION I.

THE REPUBLICAN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHURCHES.

1. EVERY *company of professed believers in Christ was a church.* They derived the right to assemble together from their individual rights as believers, expressly sanctioned by

Him whose authority they acknowledged. "WHERE TWO OR THREE ARE GATHERED TOGETHER IN MY NAME, THERE AM I IN THE MIDST OF THEM." This is a full and sufficient charter for all who choose to avail themselves of it. It recognises the right of assembling together as belonging to *two*—the smallest number that can possibly exercise it. It defines the character of the assembly—in *the name of Christ*—as distinguished from every other that can be gathered in the world. It guaranties to it his presence—the highest privilege that can be conferred upon men, and the source of all other privileges and advantages. Every such assembly, whether small or large, is a church of Christ before its officers are appointed; giving existence to them, not deriving existence from them; as a tree has existence before the branches, even the loftiest of them. If they boast, yet they bear not the root, but the root bears them.

A strong confirmation of the position here maintained is afforded by the apostolic epis-

bles. These are all addressed *to the churches*, while their officers are either not referred to at all, or only as having their place in the church. The importance of this remark requires the evidence which supports it to be adduced in detail.

The epistle standing first in the received arrangement, written to the church in the Imperial city, whose officers, according to the prophetic discernment of the apostle, were at length to claim supreme authority over that and all other churches, is addressed "to all in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints." It contains not the slightest intimation that officers existed in the church, until, in the exhortations "to every man," they come to view in their place. The subsequent epistles are addressed "to the church of God which is at Corinth;" "to the churches of Galatia;" "to the saints at Ephesus;" "to all in Christ Jesus, in Philippi," *with the officers*; "to the saints and faithful brethren at Colosse;" "to the church of the Thessalonians;" "to the

holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling;" "to the twelve tribes;" "to the strangers scattered through Asia Minor who had obtained precious faith;" to Christians generally, and "to the seven churches of Asia," with a special message "to the angel of each church."

2. *Each church was an independent body.* Its independence was a necessary attribute of its existence. As every man acquires a right to liberty by being born, so every company of believers acquires a right to independence by associating together in the name of Christ. We have to inquire whether at the beginning the right was acknowledged and guaranteed.

With reference to the church at Jerusalem, the answer is on the surface. At first, it consisted of those who, at or before the ascension of Christ, had become his disciples. It was enlarged by the addition of those who gladly received the word of the apostles, and who had precisely the same right to the privileges of the church as the original company

themselves. That this right was fully recognised is evident from the entire narrative in the Acts.

If, therefore, the gospel had been designed for the Jews only, its indefinite extension among them would not have endangered the independence of the church. But as it was for the world, *the principles upon which its colonies should be established* were of vital importance to their *liberty*. Two main questions were to be answered. 1st. Should the gospel be extended at all to the nations? If so, on what terms, of equality or subordination; of independence or vassalage? 2d. Should it be extended ONLY by those who had been appointed by Christ while on earth, together with such as should derive authority from them? In other words, Should a patent right be held by the original apostles, their successors and authorized agents?

(1.) Should Christianity be given to the nations, and on what terms? It seems strange that any hesitation should have been

felt by the disciples after their Master's injunction—"Go into all the world—to every creature;" yet such was the strength of national prejudice that, when first scattered abroad from Jerusalem, they preached to Jews only. This narrowness of mind was to be enlarged. One of the apostles received a special command to speak unto a company of Gentiles, and to treat them as brethren. While obeying the command, he saw the Holy Ghost descend on the company. Immediately he drew the all-important conclusion, that since the Gentiles had received directly from God the very same gift as the believing Jews, they were entitled to equal privileges in the church. Some at Jerusalem arraigned his conduct, but he summed up his defence by the question—"Forasmuch as God gave them the like gift as unto us, what was I, that I could withstand God?" Thus it appears that the reception of the Gentiles was not a concession from men, but a grant from God, on the same terms and at-

tested in the same manner as had been done towards the original company of converts. Equality of rights was secured to all by the exercise of His sovereignty who doeth what he will with his own. But,

(2.) Should Christianity be extended *only* by those who had been appointed by Christ when on earth, together with such as should derive authority from them? We know not whether this question was at first entertained by the apostles themselves. They were the appointed witnesses, and knew of none others. If, therefore, they supposed that all the work rested on them, they are not to be censured for a supposition which was apparently warranted by the facts at first before them. But to us, who know the pretensions which have subsequently arisen to the possession of exclusive apostolic authority transmitted by an unbroken succession, the question is vastly important.

If the letters patent were ever issued, they must have been *at the beginning*. The so-

called chain of succession professes to have passed through many dark places, in which the difficulty of ascertaining whether it be broken increases in proportion to the probability that it has been broken. This probability has been set forth in terms so strong, by a logic which even the mitre cannot confuse or corrupt, that we wonder how any sane man can risk the slightest interests on the continuity of such a chain.* But, without attempting to trace it in its course, let us advance at once to the daylight of the apostolic age, and if we find that the *first* link was never attached either to James, or Cephas, or John, or any other of "those who seemed to be *pillars*," we need not concern ourselves whether the remaining links be continuous or broken, or whether they be formed of cobweb, of iron, or perchance of gold.

The authority of the twelve apostles is not disputed, but affirmed. The question is

* See Archbishop Whateley's "Kingdom of Christ."

whether it was exclusive, and could be transmitted to others *only* by them. The answer is at hand. The middle wall of partition which had excluded the Gentiles was, as we have seen, broken down by the act of God, but the work of establishing Christianity among them was yet scarcely begun. By what instrumentality was it to be accomplished? Here the Divine sovereignty was signally displayed. While the twelve apostles were sent abroad to various regions, it pleased God to call one by his grace to be THE APOSTLE OF THE GENTILES, whose agency should be much greater than that of all the rest in declaring, by inspiration, the laws of Christianity, and in diffusing it abroad, especially in those western regions which have ever since exerted such paramount influence over the civil and religious destiny of the world, and in which the assumption of exclusive apostolic authority, transmitted by regular descent, has produced the greatest results. The appointment of this apostle

was surely the most important event that could occur among Christians after the ascension of their Lord and the descent of the Holy Spirit. Here, if at all, ought the chain of succession to begin. Such an officer, if not one of the original twelve, ought at least to have been appointed by them. If they were the heart of the system, the main artery ought to go out from them. But how signally different was the fact. Saul of Tarsus was taken by the direct agency of Christ from a state of bitter hostility against him, and set apart to be an apostle without the intervention of a human being, except "a disciple at Damascus" to baptize him.

His official standing was often questioned, because it had not been derived from the twelve. Among the numerous assertions of it into which he was thus driven, the most decisive is in the Epistle to the Galatians. He there declares that his apostleship was neither "*from men*" as the source, nor *by man* as the channel, but immediately from God;

that prior to its exercise, he had not conferred with men, nor even gone to meet those who were apostles before him; that three years of his official career had elapsed before he saw any of them, and then only two of them, and for a few days; that fourteen years had been spent in arduous labours before a more explicit understanding with his colleagues became necessary, because of pretenders who, arrogating to themselves authority as if from Jerusalem, denied his office and denounced his teaching. He perceived that their design was to spy out the *liberty* of the Gentiles, and bring them into *bondage*. Consequently, in order that the truth might be preserved, he did not, even for an instant, yield to them, but entered into conference with his fellow apostles, as with his peers, in whose name these pretenders assumed to act.

The result was in the highest degree satisfactory. The apostles did not deny his authority; they claimed no superiority or jurisdiction over him; they pretended to no

transmission to him of rights patented to them; they insinuated no deficiency in him. On the contrary, perceiving *the grace given him*, they extended to him the right hand of fellowship, and cordially assented to the division of labour between them. Thus, while his apostleship, without transmission by human hands, was recognised, the equal rights of all the brethren with him were also secured.

At the same time, the church at Jerusalem publicly declared that national churches were, and of right ought to be, independent of all allegiance and responsibility to herself. The same false teachers who, pretending authority from Jerusalem, denied Paul's apostleship, also contradicted his teaching, and attempted to impose the rites of Judaism upon the Gentiles. This produced much earnest discussion, and at length a deputation to Jerusalem. The assembly which convened there to consider the subject has been called "the first general council," with how little reason

will appear, if we take notice that it consisted of the whole church at Jerusalem, and a delegation, probably, from Antioch alone, although other churches were interested in the reference. The latter went to complain to the former, and to inquire of them concerning those who in *their* name were imposing burdens on the Gentiles.

The resolution, which, after mature deliberation, was unanimously adopted by the mother church, disclaims any authority over the churches of other lands. Its preamble sets forth the ground upon which alone they interfere in the premises. They do not say, "*Forasmuch as you are rightfully under our jurisdiction, and as we are responsible to God for you;*" but "*Forasmuch as we have heard THAT CERTAIN WHO WENT OUT FROM US have troubled you with words subverting your souls, to whom we gave no commandment :*" therefore, we unanimously disavow their doctrine, and declare unto you our judgment, in which we have the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that

“no greater burden *is to be imposed upon you* than these following necessary things,” and while from these it is all-important that you continue pure, such a result is not to be aimed at by an unwarrantable exercise by us of discipline over you, but from them you are, as free and independent churches, to “*guard yourselves.*”

It is argued that this judgment of the mother church was authoritative, since, when Paul visited the churches which he had planted, “he delivered them the *decrees* to keep that had been *ordained.*” Let the strongest signification be assigned to the words “decree” and “ordained.” It will then follow that the action of the church at Jerusalem had the force of law upon *those over whom their jurisdiction extended.* Who were they? Not the Gentile churches, but *those of their own number who had gone forth teaching in their name, and as if by their authority.* For, why did Paul give his churches this decree? Not that they might govern their personal conduct by it.

They already abstained from the actions specified. The doctrine which Paul had taught them was not deficient in such essential particulars. He expressly declared that having received it complete from Christ, he neither permitted any man to add unto it, nor did the apostles at Jerusalem attempt to do so. For what purpose, therefore, would his churches need to "guard the decrees?" Plainly, that when they were "troubled with words" from any one who professed to come in the name of the church at Jerusalem, they might "stop his mouth" by adducing from his own church the written disavowal of his mission and doctrine, and the command to him to impose no such burdens upon any believing Gentiles.

3. *Each church elected its own officers.*

ELECTION OF AN APOSTLE.

At the resurrection of Christ he found in the college of apostles whom he had appointed a vacancy, occasioned by the death of Ju-

das. As He did not see proper to fill it by his own act, the choice devolved, not on the apostles alone, but on the whole church. Peter arose in the midst of the disciples, (who then numbered one hundred and twenty,) stated the exigency that existed, and the qualifications requisite in a candidate for the office. Two persons were then nominated by the disciples, one of whom they elected. The choice was determined by "giving lots," which was one of the methods employed among the Greeks in electing public officers. It is not material to the argument to know in what manner the lots were given. The essential point is that the *disciples* gave *their* lots. It was an election by the church, in whatever way it was made. The successful candidate "was numbered with the apostles." The word here used denotes, according to its strict signification, that he was placed *by vote* among the apostles.

ELECTION OF DEACONS.

When the sudden increase of the church required that a public provision should be made for the strangers who had been so unexpectedly detained in Jerusalem, the funds were naturally placed in the apostles' hands. But they soon saw the necessity of relieving themselves of such business, not only that they might be free to attend to their peculiar duties, but doubtless, also, because they foresaw the evils which would arise from the funds of the church being in the hands of the same officers who exercised spiritual authority. They therefore "*called together the multitude of the disciples,*" and proposed that they should "*select for themselves*" seven men of suitable qualifications, to take charge of the pecuniary affairs. The proposition "*pleased the whole church,*" and they accordingly elected ("chose out for themselves") the seven men, whom the apostles proceeded to install into office.

ELECTION TO OFFICE THE GENERAL PRACTICE.

Thus, at the very beginning of Christianity,

an APOSTLE, and SEVEN VERY IMPORTANT OFFICERS, were elected by the universal suffrage of the church. These elections, held at the instance of the apostles, we are warranted in regarding as normal precedents to be generally imitated. It remains to inquire whether, in fact, the imitation was practised.

We have already shown that the Epistles are addressed to *the churches*, as, under God, the source of action and government. It is fair to conclude that the choice of their own officers—a privilege resting on the very foundation-stone of sovereignty, and not attended with greater difficulty than others clearly belonging to them—would certainly be secured to them. Nor is there any intimation in the New Testament that the apostles authoritatively appointed church officers irrespective of the choice of the people. Paul and Barnabas “ordained elders.” Timothy was directed to *commit the truth to faithful men*, and Titus to *ordain* elders. But instal-

lation into office is distinct from election to office. In modern times, a diocesan bishop "institutes" a rector who has been elected by the people; a presbytery installs a pastor who has been elected by the people; a judge administers the oath of office to a governor or president who has been elected by the people. Therefore, the fact that apostles, their associates, and deputies ordained church officers, is no proof that these had not been previously elected by the church. This inference is confirmed by the identity of the word employed in the direction to Titus—*καταστροφης*—with that used by the apostles when they offered to install into office the deacons who should be elected by the whole church. Since the act of the apostles was subsequent to an election by the church, there is nothing to diminish the previous probability that the similar act of Titus was to follow a similar election.

Finding, clearly recorded, the election of an apostle as the first act of the church, and of

the first officers appointed to take charge of pecuniary affairs; finding, fully portrayed, popular forms of government, of which the election of officers is an almost essential feature; meeting no accounts of appointment to office that are inconsistent with a previous election by the church, we also find repeated records of officers having been elected for the performance of specific duties. Some of these were the messengers of the churches to convey their contributions to distant brethren. Of one it is expressly added, not only that his praise was in the churches, but that he had been *chosen by the churches* to the work. When the church at Jerusalem heard of the spread of the truth, *they sent forth* Barnabas to aid in its advance. When the discussion arose at Antioch with the Judaizing teachers, *the church determined to send* Paul, Barnabas, and others to Jerusalem concerning it. In reply, *it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men* to Antioch. When in the Corinthian church there arose

a division with reference to Apollos, Paul recognised their right to have him as their minister, if they desired it; for he wrote to them—"As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you, but his will was not at all to come now."

Passing to uninspired history, we find that churches in the apostolic age elected their pastors. Clement, the first pastor of the church at Rome whose office is clear from all doubt, was chosen by the unanimous voice of the church. He also declares that officers were ordained (using the same word—*καθίστημι*—as designates the installation of deacons and of elders) at first by the apostles, and afterwards by other distinguished men, "*the whole church having given their consent.*" This was plainly the extension of the practice of the church, as recorded in the New Testament. The restriction gradually placed on elections, (as we shall soon have occasion to trace it,) until they were at length entirely wrested from the people, will further

illustrate the position, that they could have been introduced only at the beginning.

REPUBLICAN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OFFICERS OF
CHURCHES.

1. *There was a plurality of officers in each church.*

In the church at Jerusalem were the apostles and *elders*; in that at Antioch, prophets and teachers. Paul and Barnabas ordained elders in every church. In the church at Ephesus were the elders. In that at Philippi, bishops and deacons. Titus ordained elders in every city.

2. *There was equality of rank among the officers.*

When Paul sent for the elders of the church at Ephesus, he addressed them together, as being equals in rank, exercising the same office, and being subject to the same responsibility. They had a joint guardianship over the church, and were consequently directed to take heed to all the flock over which

the Holy Spirit had made them overseers, (*επισκοπους*), to feed the church of God, which He had purchased with His own blood.

The deacons were not subordinate to the elders. They had different duties assigned them, and are not to be compared as to rank with the elders, either as being greater or less. Both offices required men of exalted and tried character. By comparing the qualifications specified in the directions to Timothy, it will appear that the deacons were to be of equal standing with the elders, except that teaching formed no part of their official duty. So far from their being in an inferior subordinate position, it is declared that they who executed their office well purchased for themselves a good degree—*βαθμον καλον*—an honourable standing.

3. *Every church had its own officers, whose authority was exercised in IT alone.*

This is evident from what has been already shown. The church at Jerusalem had their own elders. That at Antioch their pastors

and teachers. The churches at Ephesus and at Philippi had each their own bishops. It is unnecessary to dwell longer on this point at present, because, in tracing the change which was gradually wrought in the institutions of the churches, we shall have occasion to see how long even the growing authority of a bishop continued to be limited to a *single* church.

Thus it clearly appears from the New Testament, that every primitive Christian church was an independent republic.

4. Several rights, resulting from their independence, were probably exercised at an early period, perhaps from the beginning, but are not specified or enjoined in the New Testament. Of these, two may be mentioned—the right of the officers to choose a president, and of the churches to form associations among themselves.

PRESIDING OFFICER.

It is natural, if not indispensable, for every board of officers to choose a president. This

choice may be made at every meeting, or for a stated period, or for life. Nor does such an officer necessarily destroy the republican character of the organization at whose head he is placed. Every town meeting has its chairman, every municipal council, every legislative body, every commonwealth has its presiding officer. They do not on this account cease to be republican. Yet it is manifest, that according to the length of time during which the same person continues to preside, and to the degree of power which is granted or allowed him, will be the ease with which the republic may be transformed into a monarchy.

ASSOCIATION OF CHURCHES.

The other right to which we referred is that which any number of churches has, to form associations among themselves. This arises directly from the independence of each church. "They may contract alliances." As any number of persons may unite themselves into a church, so any number of

churches may associate themselves into a synod, council, convention, assembly, binding the whole by such rules, and delegating to it such powers as may seem to them expedient. This is the basis upon which rests the validity of the early councils, and of all later similar associations. Whether their lawful authority be greater or less, having the force of law, or only of advice, depends on the powers which the associating churches delegated to the council at its formation, and continue unrevoked.

CHAPTER III.

THE RISE OF PRELACY IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

WE come now to the question—How were these republican institutions changed into monarchical? The answer may be stated in a single line—BY ASSIMILATION TO THE CIVIL AUTHORITY.

There was placed in the midst of a civil government which all proceeded from the will of one man, a system of republican religious institutions. These Christ designed should extend everywhere, and be adhered to with all fidelity. The contrariety between them and the despotic character of the existing civil government, he had deliberately chosen and ordained as an essential feature of his church. Some of his disciples having, while he was on earth, aspired to the chief places

in his kingdom, which they imagined was of an earthly nature, he seized the opportunity to give instruction of fundamental and permanent importance. Calling the twelve around him, he said: "*Ye know that they who are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and their great ones exercise authority upon them. BUT SO SHALL IT NOT BE AMONG YOU; but whosoever will be great among you shall be your minister, and whosoever of you will be chiefest shall be the servant of all.*"

Had the contrariety, thus positively commanded, between the republican churches and the imperial government been maintained, the latter would have been restrained, softened, and remodelled. It was greatly influenced and endangered, because of the vital energy with which the principles of Christianity were at first diffused. But instead of intelligently and resolutely adhering to the direction,—"*So shall it not be among you,*"—the officers of churches gradually, unconsciously, arrogantly

imitated the lordship and authority which were exercised around them everywhere, at all times, and in all matters, and to which their brethren and themselves were constantly accustomed to yield. Thus situated, it was scarcely possible to avoid the imitation entirely; the people would not notice it, or be alarmed at its rise and progress. Their whole lives were moving on under royal authority, and if in their midst another similar force should begin and increase, it would at first exert no perceptible influence on their condition, nor would they dream of what would be its ultimate strength and results.

The imitation took place both in the spirit and manner of executing the republican offices, and in the actual elevation of one man over the other officers and over the church. At first, as we have seen, a plurality of bishops existed in each church. To one of these, at an early period, perhaps from the beginning, the office of president was assigned. This may have been done either informally, by a

tacit yielding to the oldest or the most gifted presbyter, or by a regular election. But, in whatever way he obtained the office, the president at first neither claimed nor possessed any superiority of rank over his colleagues. His actions were performed in their name, by their permission, with their assent. There was, however, in his breast that love of authority which is natural to men. There was also near at hand a civil officer who, having been clothed with authority by the emperor, was exercising "lordship" over the people. The robes, the insignia, the power of the imperial functionary were habitually in the view of the president, of the other bishops, and of the whole church. All their ideas were imbibed and fostered in the atmosphere of official authority. Their whole lives, all the circumstances of their condition, were affected and controlled by official power.

Amidst such influences, a change imperceptibly took place in the church. We need not suppose that it began in every instance

with the presiding officer. The other presbyters were as likely to promote it as he. The idea that they were separated from the people as an "order," and were elevated over them as rulers, would be fostered in their breasts simultaneously with any notions which might be cherished by him of superiority to *them* and of authority over *them*. The growth in their own ideas would disincline them to oppose, would incline them to promote, the similar growth in his. They would be as ready to yield authority as he would be to claim it. Perhaps, in some instances they pressed upon him assumptions which he was not yet willing or ready to attempt.

The change would be manifested at first in the tone and manner of the officer in executing his undoubted duties. His actions in the name of his colleagues and of his church would, gradually, be performed in his own. That which they yielded unconsciously, or as a favour, or for convenience, he would retain as a prerogative conferred from heaven.

That which began by permission of the church, was transformed, in its progress, to authority over the church.

That such a change was likely to occur, might be inferred from the warning of Christ —“ Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you ; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant ; even as the Son of man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister.”

That the process commenced even in the time of the apostles, is evident from their writings. When Paul predicted the career of the “man of sin,” whose iniquities would be accomplished by *exalting himself*, he testified that the “mystery was already at work.” When Peter exhorted the elders to feed the flock of God, he added the following remarkable counsel—“Neither as being *lords* over

the heritage." The last of the apostles, in his epistle to Gaius, says—"I wrote unto the church, but Diotrephes, who *loveth to have the pre-eminence among them*, receiveth us not, * * prating against us with malicious words; and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church." This describes a very respectable advance towards monarchy. If the succession of popes does not date from Diotrephes, he certainly ought to stand early in the list. He claimed the prerogative of recognising or of refusing to recognise the members and officers of the church, and even of rejecting an apostle; of putting offenders under interdict, and of pronouncing excommunication. These are some of the elements of papal power. The principal drawback to it was, that such things as lions, swords, stakes, crosses, and tortures were yet in the hands of the officer in the government-house over the way.

The New Testament also exhibits the

growth of monarchical power in a single church during a definite period. When Paul, about the year 60, wished to give his parting counsel to the church of Ephesus, he sent for its *bishops*, whom he thus indicated as being *then* its official representatives. When the Saviour, about the close of the first century, sent his final message to the same church, he addressed *one man*, whom he thus indicated as being *then* its official representative. Thus we see that during forty years a change had been progressing in the Ephesian church. The equality of its officers had been yielding to the rise of one man in influence and power.

The causes which produced this change in one place, existed everywhere. There was no such thing, at that time, as a republican civil government. All power was royal and despotic. Consequently, what was imitated in one place would be in another. The universality of the change would also be promoted by the influence and example of the churches established in large and important

cities. There the power of the civil government would be exercised more definitely and with greater splendour. Consequently, the tendency to imitation would be greater, and the church in its turn would be a centre of influence to less important places around it. Thus the original constitution, by which *bishops* had been appointed in the church at Ephesus, in the church at Philippi, and in the churches of every city, gradually verged towards the secondary state, expressed by the famous maxim, "No church without a *bishop*."

The jurisdiction of each bishop, as he rose to prelacy, continued to be, in general, over only a single church. This is evident even from the maxim just quoted, "Nulla ecclesia sine episcopo." As there was not any church without a bishop, it follows that each bishop had only one church. The same thing is proved by the *number* of bishops. "In Asia Minor, a tract of land not much larger than Great Britain, there were about FOUR HUN-

DRED bishops.”* At a conference between Augustine and the Donatists, about the year 410, there were present between FIVE AND SIX HUNDRED bishops from, as it would seem, a single province.† From that part of Africa in which the Vandalic persecution raged, SIX HUNDRED AND SIXTY bishops fled, a great number were murdered or imprisoned, and many more remained in safety.‡ The whole number, according to this statement, could not have been less than one thousand.

The episcopal office, enjoyed by so many, was at first regarded as possessing essentially equal authority and honour. But the change wrought, in imitation of the civil authority, gradually, yet completely, destroyed this equality.

A series of gradations was established, by which the rank and jurisdiction of a bishop were exactly proportioned to the rank which the city, or town, or district in which his

* Bingham.

† Bishop Burnet.

‡ Victor Uticensis, 5th cent.

church was contained, enjoyed in the empire. Bishops in the country came to be accounted inferior to those in towns; those in unimportant towns to those in more splendid cities. And as, among the latter, a few were pre-eminent in position and wealth, the rank of their civil rulers was the standard to which the dignity of their bishops approached.

Over all, prior to the accession of Constantine, three cities, ANTIOCH, ALEXANDRIA, AND ROME, enjoyed unquestioned superiority—the former two, as having been, prior to their conquest, the seats of splendid monarchies; the latter as the capital of the empire. In accordance with this superiority, we find the bishops of these three cities gradually rising in rank above all others. But these cities were not equal among themselves in civil rank. Antioch had depended for her grandeur mainly on being a royal city. Hence, after the Syrian monarchy was overthrown, it gradually decayed, and ranked as the *third*

city of the empire. After the conquest of Egypt, the importance of Alexandria was sustained by commerce. Hence it was accounted the second city. And as Rome was "the great city which reigned over all," none disputed the first place with her. In precise proportion to this scale of secular grandeur, was the rank of the bishops, as yielded at first, imperceptibly, by custom, and at length determined by the votes of councils. The bishop of Antioch was assigned the third position, the bishop of Alexandria the second, the bishop of Rome the first.

These changes were in progress during the first three centuries. The imitation of the civil government was, however, necessarily imperfect while, so long as Christianity continued a religion unrecognised by the state, there were many restraints upon the assumption, or at least the open manifestation of authority on the part of its officers. According to prophetic announcement, the civil power continued to hinder their exaltation until it

was taken out of the way. But when the emperor embraced Christianity, there was a rapid maturing of the change. The authority which had been creeping on slowly in the footsteps of custom, was now suddenly proclaimed by the majesty of law.

The position which Constantine assumed in the church, itself identified the civil and ecclesiastical governments. He who exercised lordship over the nations, exercised it also over the churches. Thus the command of Christ, "*So shall it not be among you,*" was reversed; and thus the transformation of the churches, from independent associated republics, to a consolidated department of the empire, was advanced.

The emperor, having become the head of the church, proceeded to establish the hierarchy in close imitation of the civil rulers.

The transfer of the capital to the shores of the Bosphorus furnished a signal illustration of the fact, that the differences of rank among bishops was occasioned by the differ-

ent degrees of secular importance possessed by the cities in which their churches were placed. Before the transfer, the bishop of Byzantium had been suffragan to the bishop of Heraclea; after it, the bishop of Heraclea became suffragan to the bishop of Constantinople.

The empire was divided, as to its secular government, into four prefectures; these were subdivided into dioceses,* and the dioceses into provinces. The governors of the provinces were subject to those of the dioceses, those of the dioceses to the prefects, and the prefects to the emperor. In like manner, the bishops of the provinces were subjected to the bishop of its metropolis; the metropolitans of the provinces, to the metropolitan of their diocese; and the metropolitans of the dioceses ranked below the bishops of the four cities, Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, and Constan-

* It is important here to take notice that the term "*diocese*," which now is used only in an ecclesiastical sense, originally denoted only a division of the empire.

tinople, who, like the four prefects, were inferior only to the emperor.

As the imperial grandeur of Constantinople increased, the importance of Antioch and Alexandria decayed, leaving the new capital, without rival, the first city of the East. In equal degree, the bishops thereof, thinking the see raised with the city, taking great state upon them, began to act as if they had been as much exalted above other bishops as their city was above other cities. This gave no small umbrage to their brethren; but the great interest the bishops of Constantinople had at court enabling them to oblige or disoblige whom they pleased, the other prelates chose rather to gain their favour by yielding to their ambition, than incur their displeasure by opposing it. In the year 383, the bishops of the capital were already so far exalted by the connivance and tacit consent of their colleagues, as to take place of all the bishops of the East. Hence, at the œcumenical council held that year, Gregory, bishop of that city,

was called to preside, though the patriarch of Alexandria, hitherto, according to the canons, the first after that of Rome, was present. In this act the council decreed that, according to established custom, (*i. e.* that bishops should rank according to the rank of their cities,) *the bishop of NEW ROME should have the first place of honour after that of OLD ROME.**

By this canon no positive jurisdiction was added to the first bishop of the East. He was only placed in rank and dignity next to the bishop of Rome. But having secured the title, he began to exercise gradually a corresponding degree of power. Beginning with Thrace, and alleging that Constantinople, which was the head of that diocese according to the civil polity, ought to be so too according to the ecclesiastical, which was founded on the civil, he assumed at once the title, claimed the rights, and exercised, within the limits of that diocese, all the jurisdiction peculiar to a patriarch. In the next place, he

* Bower's History of the Popes.

succeeded in exercising the same jurisdiction in the dioceses of Pontus and Asia, and afterwards in the patriarchate of Antioch. Thus, in the course of a few years, out of the five dioceses into which the East was divided, four were subjected to the see of Constantinople.

Application was now made to the council of Chalcedon, to confirm the authority which had been assumed. By that council the decree was re-enacted which placed the bishop of new Rome next in dignity to the bishop of old Rome; a patriarchal jurisdiction was vested in him over the dioceses of Pontus, Asia, and Thrace; and, in general, all the rights, prerogatives, and privileges were granted to him, without restriction or limitation, which had been granted to or enjoyed by the bishop of Rome. For doing so they assigned this reason:—"Whereas, the see of old Rome had been, not undeservedly, distinguished by the fathers with some privileges, *because that city was the seat of the empire*, the

fathers of Constantinople were prompted by the same motive to distinguish the most holy see of new Rome with equal privileges, thinking it fit that the city which they saw honoured with the empire and the senate, and equalled in every civil privilege to old Rome, should be likewise equalled to her in ecclesiastical matters.”*

Thus, as there were now two imperial cities which, without rivals, were exalted above all others, so the bishops of these two cities were exalted, without rivals, over those of all others.

But the process of exaltation had not yet reached its height. Other rivalship having been distanced, Constantinople was now the great rival of Rome. Hitherto, the latter had been first in honour and power. She still enjoyed the prestige which the greatness of a thousand years had given her, and which the upstart magnificence of the new city could not at once take away. But the

* Bower.

tide was ebbing from the Tiber to the Bosphorus. The presence, wealth, and majesty of the emperor had been removed from the one to the other. Hence, as the one was adorned and favoured, the other insensibly declined. In the rivalry between them, the western capital depended on the past; the eastern was elated with the triumph of the present. In such a contest, the victory, though it might be delayed, could not be doubtful. Rome at length felt the superiority of Constantinople. In like manner, the supremacy of the western bishop bowed before that of the eastern, to whom the title of UNIVERSAL BISHOP was given by the emperor, and confirmed by the assembly of patriarchs, metropolitans, and senators.

The pope, filled with jealousy at this exaltation of his rival over himself, remonstrated and anathematized in vain. Although he wrote to the patriarch, the emperor, and the empress, denouncing the new title as "vain, ambitious, profane, impious, execrable, anti-

christian, blasphemous, infernal, and diabolical,"* it nevertheless continued to be given and employed.

Phocas having seized the purple and put the imperial family to death, the pope hastened to acknowledge his authority, ascribing his accession to the special providence of God, and calling on angels in heaven and men upon earth to render unto him glory and praise. The usurper, in return for this precious benediction, took away the envied title from the patriarch, and gave it to the pope.

But both bishops, having once obtained it, refused to renounce it. Thus, with equal titles they continued their contests for supremacy, as opportunities were presented, until, in the ninth century, a furious storm arose between them, which swept over Christendom, and which, though sometimes lulled, continued to rage though several centuries, and at last tore asunder the western from the eastern church.

* Bower.

CHAPTER IV.

GROWTH OF THE POPE'S TEMPORAL POWER.

INSTEAD of following them through this long period, let us retrace our steps, and, confining our attention to the West, attempt to indicate the causes which promoted the growth of the bishop of Rome's temporal power.

In this, Paul's prediction will still guide us through the labyrinth. The civil power *was* "*taken out of the way.*"

By the conversion of Constantine, this was done in one sense : the power of an enemy became that of a friend. By the transfer of the seat of government to Constantinople in the East, and to different cities in the West, the imperial power was also in a great measure *literally* "taken out of the way" in the city of Rome.

The first effect of the removal was, as we have seen, unfavourable to the pope's dignity. But, in its ultimate result, it promoted his rise to the summit of power. The withdrawal of the imperial splendour and patronage diminished, indeed, the reflected light which they had given him ; but it also enabled him, finally, to shine in his own. It threw him into the second place with respect to his rival and to the East ; but it greatly increased his strength at home and in the West.

The supreme authority, which had been exercised at Rome for a thousand years, could not *all* be transferred in a day, and by the will of one man. That which remained necessarily sought a channel in which to flow ; and although some of it might be secured by the vicar of the city in the emperor's name, the principal portion would readily unite itself to that spiritual dominion which had been rising there for three hundred years.

The authority of the emperor over Rome

was now rapidly diminished by distance and neglect. The pope was ever on the spot, ready to press every claim, to improve every opportunity, and secure every advantage.

The authority of the emperors was rendered precarious by their variable policy, by the violent deaths to which they fell victims, and the caprice which raised them to power. The ecclesiastical government was comparatively steadfast; its policy was regulated by one grand principle—the advancement of the see of Rome, by all means and at all times. This gave the only kind of unity and constancy to the administration of successive pontiffs which the Roman church has ever possessed; it inspired confidence amidst surrounding confusion; and secured, as permanent prerogatives, all that carelessness or weakness yielded, all that superstition offered, or that ignorance allowed.

The authority of the emperors declined with the strength of the empire. Their time was consumed in vain pursuits, and their re-

sources, extorted by oppression, were lavished in luxury. The legions were enervated by inactivity, were invited to rebellion by the relaxation of discipline, and fell by each other's hands on fields of civil strife. Much that the emperors thus lost the popes gained. They were freed from restraint, their lustre became more conspicuous in proportion as greater lights were put out, and their dominion increased in vigour as knowledge sank into ignorance and religion degenerated into superstition.

When the northern tribes descended upon Rome, they were in some degree restrained by reverence for its religion, to which many of them had professed a nominal conversion and yielded a partial obedience. Consequently, as their irruptions increased to a stream, a torrent, a flood, the authority of the pope was the only species which was not overwhelmed. His intercession often averted danger; his protection was a shield around the oppressed; his wealth, sometimes left un-

touched amidst general pillage, ransomed the captive and relieved the distressed.

As the result of these causes, combined with his growing spiritual dominion, the Romans were gradually “accustomed to consider him as the first magistrate or prince of the city.”* It is impossible, even for “infallibility” itself, to point out the moment or the act in which his *influence* over civil affairs passed into *authority*.

When, about the year 730, in the contest between the West and the East respecting the worship of images, the emperor, through the exarch of Ravenna, forbade their worship, the pope excommunicated the exarch and aroused Rome and Italy to rebellion. Having triumphed, “then at last,” (according to some writers,) “the Romans saluted the pope as their lord and took an oath of allegiance to him;” according to others, they at least acknowledged no other ruler, but yielded to him the sovereignty over them, in fact if not in form.

* Gibbon.

We have followed the bishop of Rome in his progress to the foot of the throne. The manner in which he was placed upon it deserves profound attention.

The royal authority in France had long been exercised by the mayor of the palace, nominally as the king's minister, but in fact as his master. At length Pepin, son of Charles Martel, not satisfied with this precarious sovereignty, resolved to seize also the royal title. To render success certain, he first sent to the pope, asking—'Who best deserved to be called king, he who held the power or he who enjoyed only the name?' His holiness having answered, that he who held the power should also enjoy the title, Pepin assembled the states of the realm, and engaged his friends to propose that he should be declared king in the place of Childeric. They enforced their motion by announcing that it was in accordance with the opinion and recommendation of the pope. Without allowing time for deliberation, another party of his

friends raised Pepin on a shield and proclaimed him king. The usurper, to give greater security to his dynasty, was anointed by the pope.

In return for these services, he wrested from the Lombards the exarchate of Ravenna and the Pentapolis, and conferred them on the see of Rome. The grant was confirmed by Charlemagne, who, having extended his conquests, was crowned by the pope, EMPEROR OF THE WEST. "The royal unction of the kings of Israel was dexterously applied," the pope "assumed the character of a divine ambassador; German chieftains were transformed into the Lord's anointed, and this Jewish title has been diffused and maintained by the superstition and vanity of modern Europe."*

And while the usurper and his conquering son, thus raised the pope to the rank of princes, they also, by consenting to the fiction that he possessed authority from Heaven to anoint them, laid the foundation for all the

* Gibbon.

assumption of dominion over kings which afterwards became so astounding, and which reached its culmination when an emperor of Germany—a successor of Charlemagne—for the exercise of jurisdiction in his own dominions, was excommunicated, deprived of the allegiance of his subjects, compelled to cross the Alps in depth of winter, and, laying aside his diadem and robes, to stand barefoot three days at the barrier of a castle, suing for admission; then to acknowledge the pope as his judge, on whose decision hung his crown and kingdom; and finally, having fallen in the struggle, was pursued with maledictions after death, the very bishop that buried him being excommunicated for the deed, and forced to cast his body out of the grave.

THUS THE TEMPORAL SOVEREIGNTY OF THE BISHOP OF ROME, AND THE FIGMENT OF THE DIVINE RIGHT OF KINGS ROSE TOGETHER OVER EUROPE, a double star of blood in a midnight sky.

CHAPTER V.

THE CORRUPTION OF CHRISTIANITY.

IN order to understand the subject under examination, we must bear in mind that, simultaneously with the rise of ecclesiastical power, there was a growing corruption of Christian doctrine and practice. The mystery at work from the beginning was a "mystery of iniquity" as well as of power. It was characterized by want of love for truth, by lying wonders, and by all deceivableness of unrighteousness.

Christianity indeed never changes. It is now just that which Christ and his apostles taught, and which the Scriptures record. But, under the name of corrupted Christianity, we have to do with the faith and practice of men, in perversion or defiance, in ignorance or neg-

lect of the Scriptures. As thus professed, its doctrines were mingled with prevalent theories of philosophy, and with classic, druidical and Saxon superstitions. Its code of morals, sound in principle, of universal application, and requiring purity of life, was contaminated by deeply rooted corruption and lawless violence. Its active agency for promoting the instruction of mankind, having thrown aside the panoply of truth, was overpowered by the savage ignorance of the northern nations.

Amidst the vast and intricate agencies which were combined in producing these results, one fact sufficient for our purpose stands out to view;—THE WORD OF GOD WAS WITHDRAWN FROM THE KNOWLEDGE AND THE SIGHT OF MEN. This withdrawment was partly the result, and partly the cause of ignorance, error, and corruption. But, whether cause or result, it is the key to the mystery. In proportion as we could follow the course of the word of God, as it went out complete at the close of

the first century, and could mark the restrictions which impeded and arrested its progress, we should attain the clearest possible understanding of the terrible problem involved in the corruption of Christianity. Throughout the investigation, we should find the banishment of the Scriptures in close conjunction with the exaltation of papal power over the church and over the state.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GRADUAL WRESTING OF THE ELECTIVE FRANCHISE
FROM THE PEOPLE.

AT the beginning of the period through which we have now attempted to trace the rise of prelacy in the Christian churches, from the equality of republican office to the supremacy of spiritual and temporal dominion, we found that an apostle, the deacons, the bishops, and church officers in general were elected by the people.

It might be possible to follow with some minuteness the restrictions which were gradually laid upon the privilege, until it was utterly taken away. It is necessary, however, only to say, that as emperors, kings, and princes acquired influence in the church, they exercised it over the choice of officers. When an election was contested, their decree

settled the dispute. When it was the scene of popular disturbance, they interposed to quell the tumult and to control its cause. When they conferred dignity and wealth on an office, they expected to nominate the candidate and to confirm the election, if not to make the choice. When ecclesiastical office became a centre of influence and power, they claimed jurisdiction over it as sovereigns of the realm, and, in general, when it possessed any value whatever, they seized it, as they did all other things, either entirely for their own advantage, or in order to strengthen the vassalage of their subjects, "*as if* these held every thing from their sovereign lord, the king."

Thus we might venture to affirm, that, by a process substantially similar, throughout the Roman empire, and in the rising monarchies of modern Europe, elections gradually passed from the people to the king, the prince, or the prelate.

But as the despotism of Rome is the crowning height of the stupendous fabric of mo-

narchical usurpation, wondered at by multitudes who think little of the process by which it has been reared—like the dome of St. Peter's, conspicuous from afar, and dazzling the view of many who never explore the foundations on which it rests—it will be sufficient to mark the steps by which the election of the bishop of Rome passed from the whole assembly of the church, who, as we have seen, enjoyed it at the beginning.

A conspicuous interference by the emperor occurred in the year 367, in the case of a contested election, which had filled the city with confusion, and arrayed the parties of the respective claimants in bloody strife. Valentinian decided in favour of one and banished the other.

A similar difficulty occurred in 419, when Honorius not only decided between the rivals, but enacted a law ordaining, that whenever two persons were chosen, a new election should be held.

In 483, Odoacer commanded that no elec-

tion should be made without the king or his deputy being present to moderate the assembly and to approve the choice.

In 526, the city being divided into many parties, Theodoric appointed a person who had not been named among the candidates. This assumption all parties resisted, but the king finally prevailed on them to acknowledge his nominee, and ordained that in future the election by the people should not be valid unless it was confirmed by the king. This law extended to the election of all the bishops of Italy, and was continued in force by the residue of the Gothic kings, and by the Greek emperors.

In 741, the Romans being in revolt against the exarch, and the emperor being too weak to quell the rebellion, the pope elect was ordained without consulting either; and although it may not be possible to mark distinctly his first act of internal sovereignty over the people, with respect to the external authority of the emperor, this confirmation

of his own election may be viewed as the transition point at which he ceased to be a subject and claimed to be a prince.

When Charlemagne confirmed the grant of temporal dominion, he assumed the right of approving the election. This right continued to be exercised by succeeding emperors, with some interruption and resistance, until after the time of Gregory VII., when, in the midst of usurpation and strife, it disappeared.

In 1059, a more important restriction on the rights of the people was begun by a decree of the pope, that the election should be made by the college of cardinals, while the rest of the clergy and the people should be allowed only to confirm the choice. This change was not accomplished without violent opposition: it gradually, however, prevailed, and in the following century was perfected by the election being vested absolutely in the cardinals, and all others being excluded from any concern in it whatever.

Thus it was not until the threefold supremacy of Rome over the church, the state, and the truth had reached its height, that the finishing hand was put to the autocracy, by its decreeing to perpetuate itself. The pope creates the cardinals, and the cardinals elect the pope.

PART III.

REPUBLICAN INSTITUTIONS RESULTING FROM THE
REVIVAL OF CHRISTIANITY.

CHAPTER I.

DECAY OF THE PAPAL POWER.

FOR three centuries, of which Gregory, Innocent, and Boniface may stand the representatives, papal power ran to every excess of riot. But like other rioters, it spent its substance, and began to be in want.

Its usurpation hunted kings even unto the death, and they turned on their pursuer. Its tyranny drove the clergy to despair, and they rallied around their king, filled the land with remonstrance, or sullenly endured a yoke which they could not for the present throw off.

Its rival seats at Rome and Avignon divided its counsels against itself, exposed its vices, and poured upon its pretended infallibility contempt and scorn.

Its avarice and fanaticism aroused the nations to frenzy, and impelled them in unwieldy hordes, or marshalled them in glittering hosts against the might of Asia, around the so-called sepulchre. But the gigantic efforts spent themselves as waves against a rock, and when Europe came to herself again, the enchanter's spell had lost its power, the wealth of kingdoms was exhausted, and the feudal institutions—the strongest bulwarks of despotism, like their own impregnable castles, giving security to brutal violence—were undermined and tottered to their fall.

These and other influences which contributed to disenthral the human spirit, require, and have received, patient investigation from the most gifted minds. To pierce them all with eagle eye is the achievement of the statesman in his loftiest flight. It is

our easier task to trace the popular energy aroused by the Scriptures, to mark its struggles with prelatical and kingly power; its fall, deliverance, and, as we at length may hope, its approaching triumph.

CHAPTER II.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES IN FRANCE AND SWITZERLAND.

A HEATHEN historian of the fourth century contrasts "the worldly pomp of the bishops of Rome, who alleged the grandeur of the city as their excuse, with the example of some bishops of the provinces, who, by their frugal diet, plain dress, modest look, pure lives, and regular conduct in all respects, approved themselves to the eternal God, and all his true worshippers."

Such genuine Christians were to be found in many places of the provinces, doubtless in every century following the apostolic age. Among these the Vaudois and Albigenses, in the south of France, having maintained the essentials of Christianity, probably from the beginning, began about the thirteenth century

to attract notice by their numbers, their adherence to the Scriptures, and their zeal in protesting against the doctrines and tyranny of Rome. Having attempted in vain to suppress the "heresy," the pope enlisted the kings of France against them, who, at the head of crusading armies, put tens of thousands to death. Their opinions, however, were not rooted out, but were driven to the mountains, or spread abroad into many parts of Europe. *This persecution was the first of the series by which the French kings cut off, at a stroke, those who feared God and took his word as their guide.*

Again, the Bible was translated and diffused by Lefevre, Farel, Calvin, and their associates. The nation was moved. Minds, which the stirring events of the age had aroused, and which the revival of learning had trained to reflection, seized with avidity the re-asserted doctrines. Many, whom other influences had not reached, were awakened by the preaching and writings of the Reform-

ers. The Scriptures were gazed at with wonder, and read with delight. The supremacy of the pope was denied, and the independence of the civil power affirmed. Churches were constituted on the republican models furnished by the New Testament.

At first, Francis gave protection to the eloquent and learned men who were engaged in the work. Having a quarrel with the pope, he even thought of professing himself a Protestant. But it was whispered to him, "In that case you would be yourself the greatest sufferer; *a new religion requires a new prince.*" This hint appears to have decided him, and, after his captivity, he became a bitter persecutor. At the head of his court he went bareheaded to church, and while, along the streets, Protestants were being burned to death, he knelt down to pray for himself and his nation. By his permission, the retreats of the Albigenses were invaded, their towns were burned, their fields ravaged, and thousands of persons slain.

Henry II. followed in the steps of his father. As part of the festivities at his coronation, he had many Protestants burned—the earnest of what he designed to do. Political affairs for a while engrossed his attention, and procured for the Reformation a brief respite. Soon, however, the storm raged more terribly than before. The Inquisition was established, the prisons were filled, and the king seemed to be planning the destruction of all his Protestant subjects, when death cut him down.

His conduct must not be attributed to bigotry alone. The rise of the reformed religion necessarily became, in its political aspect, a struggle for liberty against absolute power. The reply made to Henry by a military officer high in rank explains the opposition of kings in general to the religion of the Bible—“Sire, you can dispose of my life, my property, and the offices I hold, but my soul is subject only to the Creator, from whom I received it, and whom, *in this respect, it is my only duty to obey*

as my Almighty Master." To assert this principle is to spring a mine beneath the throne.

The following reigns were under the control of the queen-mother and the Duke of Guise, whose mutual struggles and intrigues for the possession of absolute power gave additional rigour to despotism, and aroused the utmost fury of persecution.

The Protestant party, advancing in numbers and influence, became involved more and more in the contest for liberty. They were favoured or denounced by the royal rivals alternately, as the balance of power or the hope of supremacy required. At length civil war arrayed the strength of the kingdom in hostile ranks; and many of those most distinguished by station, ability, and character were slain. The Protestants were defeated; and after a short period of treacherous favour, their leaders were allured to Paris to join in the festivities of a royal wedding.

Then ensued the massacre of St. Bartholomew's day, the result of deliberate counsels

entered into by the pope, Catharine, Charles the Ninth, and others high in the exercise of despotic power. The tolling of a cathedral bell was the signal. The Duke of Guise, leading on the troops, and calling out that it was by the king's command, exhorted them to let none escape. Within the very walls of the palace nearly all were slain. Blood ran in a stream from its doorways, through the court, and down the principal streets into the Seine. The dead were thrown from windows and tops of houses—were dragged along the streets, and cast into the river. For three days the slaughter raged without abatement, and was prolonged, in a less degree, a whole week. It went further than the plotters anticipated, cutting down, not only the leaders of the Protestants, but, indiscriminately, all ranks. It extended also, by the king's command, beyond the city, and into every part of France.*

This atrocious deed was committed in the

* Protestantism in France.

last quarter of the sixteenth century, *and was the climax of the second wholesale extermination of a class who, in a greater degree than any others in the land, combined the love of liberty with morality and religion.*

Without pursuing the history further, we need only point to the close of the next century, when, by the revocation of the edict of Nantes, France lost half a million of her best citizens; and to the close of the next, when the horrors of the Revolution fell upon her: and—the end indeed was not yet; but we must turn, for the present, to other lands.

The independence of Switzerland, never completely lost, had been secured by William Tell, at the beginning of the fourteenth century. There was aristocracy in the government; there was arbitrary power, (for power had not yet been taught to be of gentler mood;) there was also the influence of surrounding kings, which their gold rendered doubly effective, by drawing the Swiss into

their armies, and thus subjecting them to a semi-allegiance, rending the land with factions, and often causing brothers to face each other under hostile banners.

Yet, with all these drawbacks, popular liberty had its home among the Alps. When the Reformation began its course there, it found facilities which nowhere else existed. It was indeed opposed. It was marred with tyranny. But, notwithstanding imperfections, which we have no wish to palliate or deny, there, with less of violence, less of persecution than was practised, at the same period, in any other land, were planted "churches without a prelate, in a state without a king."

CHAPTER III.

INFLUENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES IN GERMANY.

AT the beginning of the fifteenth century, John Huss, a professor in the University of Prague, began to preach against the doctrines of the Romish church, the corruptions of its clergy, and the supremacy of the pope.

His learning, eloquence, and purity of life, acting on the convictions of the people, and their general longing for a better religion, produced a great commotion, not only in the city, but throughout Bohemia. The clergy of all ranks were rendered odious. Their honours and advantages, their credit and authority, were in danger. They therefore procured his condemnation to the stake.

But his opinions were lodged in the minds and hearts of multitudes, and his death in-

flamed their zeal, and goaded them to madness. Persecuted and oppressed, they retired to a mountain and raised the standard of war, in order to obtain liberty to worship God. The emperor put many of them to death in a barbarous manner; and on their part, also, terrible outrages were committed. They were ignorant of the gospel; their struggles to obtain a knowledge of it were opposed, and their teachers put to death.

Yet they made progress. They studied the word of God more thoroughly, renounced the errors which they had retained or imbibed, sheathed the sword, and expelled the disorderly from among them. Thus improved, they maintained their faith, and were ready for the coming of a brighter day.

A century later, Luther, in the cloisters of another university, feeling after truth with a sincere, noble, but darkened mind, found the Bible, and learned from it that, being justified by faith, men have peace with God. He nailed his theses to the cathedral door,

taught the truth in the university, preached it, wrote it, and sent it through Germany, knocking at every man's door. Caught up with friendly violence to the Wartburg, he translated the Scriptures, and poured them as a flood of light over the land.

With many of the results that followed, though they be the noblest and most important, we are not now particularly concerned. We have only to mark the movement produced among the people; the stimulating of their consciences, and the strengthening of their determination to read and interpret the Bible for themselves, and to worship God according to its commands.

This brought them into collision with prelates and princes, with the pope and the emperor. Arbitrary power asserted dominion over the conscience; therefore, now, as in the first days of Christianity, obedience to the word of God was treason against the throne. The pope wrote thus to the emperor:—"If I am called to be foremost in making head

against the storm, it is not because I am the only one threatened, but because I am at the helm. The imperial authority is more invaded than even the dignity of Rome." "What!" exclaimed his legates to different kings, "will these presumptuous Germans pretend to decide points of faith in a national assembly? They seem to expect that kings, the imperial authority, all Christendom, the whole world, should bend to their decision."

The plans of the emperor for suppressing the Protestant cause were vigorous and decided. He hurried to a conclusion the war with France, made a truce with the Turks, and an alliance with the pope.

He affirmed that he took up arms not in a religious, but a civil quarrel; not to oppress any who continued quiet and dutiful, but to humble the arrogance of those who had thrown off the subordination to him under which they were placed. The pope, on the other hand, declared that the real object of their confederacy was the maintenance of religious faith.

This double assertion of the motives which influenced them, indicates the contest with spiritual and imperial power combined, which the Protestants were called to wage.

Having assembled their troops, the confederate princes published their manifesto, in which they* “represented their conduct with regard to civil affairs as dutiful and submissive; they asserted religion to be the sole cause of the violence which the emperor meditated against them; declared their resolution to risk every thing in maintenance of their religious rights, and foretold the dissolution of the German constitution if the emperor should finally prevail against them.” In reply, Charles published against them, without the consent of the diet, the ban of the empire, “the ultimate and most rigorous sentence which the German jurisprudence has provided for the punishment of traitors. By it they were declared rebels and outlaws, their goods were confiscated, their subjects absolved

* Robertson's Charles V.

from their allegiance, and it became not only lawful but meritorious to invade their territories. The confederates had now only to choose between unreserved submission to the emperor's will and open hostilities. They accordingly sent a herald to the imperial camp, with a declaration of war against Charles, renouncing all allegiance, homage or duty, which he might claim, or which they had hitherto yielded to him."

Such was the origin of the conflict, in which the triumphs of the emperor tended to increase despotic power, and the advantages gained by the Protestants promoted liberty of conscience and the general rights of mankind. "The treaty of Passau overturned the vast fabric, in erecting which Charles had employed so many years, and had exerted the utmost effort of his power and policy; annulled his regulations with regard to religion, defeated his hopes of rendering the imperial authority absolute and hereditary in his family, and established the Protestant

church in Germany upon a firm and secure basis."

Charles having resigned his dominions, Philip attempted to establish the inquisition in the Netherlands. This excited an insurrection, and resulted, after a long and bloody contest, in the independence of the United Provinces.

The continued persecution of the Protestants, by imperial authority, provoked a revolt in Bohemia, which was the beginning of a civil war throughout the empire, that was destined to continue thirty years, and, with the aid of Gustavus Adolphus, to establish freedom of worship, to emancipate the smaller states from the authority of the emperor, and render his supremacy over the Germanic body little more than a name.

CHAPTER IV.

INFLUENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES IN ENGLAND.

ABOUT the middle of the fourteenth century, John Wycliffe,* professor of divinity at Oxford, asserted, in England, the fundamental position that the knowledge of God's revealed will was to be found in the Scriptures only, by every individual who should earnestly and humbly seek it.

In his writings and sermons the paramount authority of the Holy Books was explicitly inculcated. Whatever he advanced, he endeavoured to rest on their testimony; and he at once familiarized the popular ear to many passages from them, to which it had never before listened, and excited, by these quotations, an anxious desire to possess the whole.

* Pictorial History of England

This desire, also, he met by a translation of both the Old and New Testaments into the English tongue, many copies of which were circulated by himself and his disciples.

The fruits of his teaching appeared at the beginning of the following century, when the inheritors of his opinions, under the new name of Lollards, again awoke the cry of reformation. A statute was passed against them, denouncing them for making unlawful conventicles, holding schools, writing books, wickedly instructing the people, and stirring them to sedition. The prisons were filled with them, various punishments were inflicted on them, and, for the first time, the fires of Smithfield were lighted. This persecution continued until the war of the Roses, when "the storm was their shelter."*

During the former part of Henry the Eighth's reign, the popish religion was maintained with all the strength of royal authority. His majesty even wrote against Luther, and

* Fuller.

thus earned for himself and his Protestant successors the title of 'Defender of the Faith.' But the pope having refused to divorce him, he renounced his jurisdiction and transferred the supremacy over the church to himself. He consented to a partial reformation of religion, and gave the word of God to the people, that he might thus prevent their return to Rome. He broke up the monasteries, not because of their corruptions, but that he might seize on their revenues.

“Although he had thrown off the authority of the Roman pontiff, he had no notion that the English church should be left without a pope; his objection was, not to the thing but to the person; and his main object evidently was, that in so far at least as the religion of his own subjects was concerned, he might mount the same seat of absolute authority himself. The ancient head of the Roman church never put forward greater pretensions to infallibility than were, if not distinctly advanced in words, yet constantly acted upon

by the new head of the English church in his narrower empire of spiritual despotism.”* He “seemed to think that his subjects owed an entire resignation of their reasons and consciences to him, and, as he was highly offended with those who still adhered to the papal authority, so he could not bear the haste that some were making to a further reformation before or beyond his allowance.”†

During the brief reign of Edward the Sixth, when the English reformers, because of the king's minority and piety, were at liberty to follow their own judgment, the most important progress was made towards a return to the doctrines of Scripture. Then it was that the “Calvinistic”‡ articles of religion (at first forty-two in number and afterwards condensed to thirty-nine) were prepared and published.

The character of the next reign, of its per-

* Pictorial History of England, vol. ii. p. 697.

† Bishop Burnet.

‡ Lord Chatham.

secutions and results, is represented sufficiently for our purpose by the familiar phrase "Bloody Mary."

At the accession of Elizabeth, protestantism was re-established. "She had been bred up with an hatred of the papacy and a love for the reformation; but as her first impressions in her father's reign were in favour of such old rites as he had retained, so in her own nature she loved state and some magnificence in religion, as well as in every thing else. She thought that in her brother's reign they had stripped it too much of external ornaments, and had made their doctrine too narrow in some points."*

Entertaining these views, she interposed her authority to arrest the reformation at such a point between popery and protestantism, as, in her opinion, was the proper "via media," and to stereotype it there for ever. "With her prejudices in favour of the old religion, she was doubtless an instrument in the hand of

* Bishop Burnet.

God, for stopping the progress of the reformation.”*

“There were men among the clergy who were opposed, among other things, [we select the points bearing on *liberty* rather than those on *doctrine*,] to the claims of the bishops to be considered a superior order to presbyters, and to have the sole right of ordination and exercise of ecclesiastical discipline; to the temporal dignities annexed to the episcopal office; to the prohibition in the public service of prayers composed by the clergyman himself; to the appointment of ministers by presentations from the crown, the bishops and lay patrons, instead of by the election of the people.”† “The greater part of the clergy positively objected to the use of the surplice, including Sandys, Grindal, Pilkington, Jewell, Horn, Parkhurst, Bentham, and all the leading men, who were for simplifying our church ceremonial, in that and other respects, accord-

* Brit. Crit. for Oct. 1842, p. 333.

† Pictorial History of England, vol. ii. p. 717.

ing to the Genevan model. Archbishop Parker standing almost alone with the *Queen in her determination to uphold it unaltered.*"*

This prelate, who stood next to the throne, together with some others, having been appointed commissioners by the queen, summoned the clergy of the several dioceses before them, and suspended all who refused to subscribe an agreement to *submit to the queen's injunctions* in regard to habits, rites, and ceremonies. Great numbers of ministers, including many of those most eminent for their zeal, piety, and popularity as preachers, were thus ejected from both the service and the profits of their cures, and sent forth into the world in a state of entire destitution. When they published a vindication of their opinions, an order was issued that no person should print or publish, sell, bind or stitch any book against the *queen's injunctions*.

Thus cast out of the church, the nonconformists assembled in private houses or else-

* Brit. Crit. for 1842, p. 330.

where, to worship God according to their own consciences. This practice gave the queen and her commissioners abundant employment in putting down "conventicles." Offenders were arrested and punished in great numbers. When Archbishop Grindal recommended mild measures, the queen suspended him from his see and shut him up in his own house. The House of Commons having taken into consideration several measures for restraining the power of the church, she sent to tell them how highly she was offended by their daring to encroach on her supremacy and attempting what she had already forbidden. She also commanded the speaker to see that no bills touching reformation in matters ecclesiastical should be exhibited.

These facts may serve as specimens of that "strong Tudor arm, by which she kept" both the clergy and the representatives of the people "in decent bounds."

When James ascended the English throne, he swore that he would allow no toleration,

and declared that he would have one doctrine—one discipline—one religion in substance and in ceremonies. He pithily expressed his views in the maxim—“*No bishop—no king ;*” and afterwards, with still more point, “*If you aim at a Scottish Presbytery, IT AGREETH WITH MONARCHY AS GOD WITH THE DEVIL.*”

Such an opening may indicate the character of his reign, and foreshadow the struggle between liberty and despotism, which was to be prolonged with increasing intensity throughout the century, and to result in the temporary overthrow, the permanent weakening, and, may we not add, the final downfall of the English throne.

We have now traced the effect of the reasserted Scripture doctrine, in arousing through different countries of Europe a determined pursuit of religious liberty among the people; and have seen that this was met with an equally determined resistance by arbitrary power. But although the various

national elements which entered into the result may be separately considered, they scarcely had a separate existence. The same truth was employed in attacking one system of errors which was widely diffused among minds substantially alike. Hence there was a uniformity of result amidst variety, and a seeking after essential agreement even when contradiction and strife appeared. Bonds of brotherhood were established among people of different countries. Correspondence was instituted among minds of the highest order concerning the grandest and most important truths. The learning and writings of one land were communicated to others. Strangers from far distant regions were transformed to friends by common sufferings and joys. The exiles of France found refuge in Bohemia and other places; those of the Netherlands in England, and those of England, in their turn, on the Continent.

There was unity also in the opposition of kings. Charles and Francis, covering their

enmity with the semblance of friendship, joined alliance against the heretics. Philip, Catherine, and the Pope, met in secret council to plan a general massacre throughout Christendom. Catholic Spain exhausted her strength in seeking to overwhelm Protestant England.

By these, and by other causes which lie out of the plane of the present inquiry, the people of Europe were verging, though slowly, into unity of feeling and purpose; while storms of war, excited by royal tyranny, ambition and strife, were for centuries to shroud them in darkness, drench them in blood, and rend them into fragments.

In the mean time a new hemisphere had been discovered, and to it the working out of liberty for mankind was now to be transferred.

CHAPTER V.

INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE UPON AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS.

THAT a new era in the development of Divine providence was at hand, might have been inferred from the accumulation of events which were calculated to change the face of the world.

The fall of Constantinople, by which the Eastern Empire was enveloped in the dark despotism of the False Prophet; the revival of Hebrew and Greek literature, by which the restoration of God's word to Europe, and eventually to all nations, was secured; the invention of printing, which would bring human and Divine knowledge within the reach of every individual mind; the birth of Luther, Zwingle, Farel, Calvin, Cranmer, and Knox, who were to be among the principal agents in re-diffusing Christianity; and THE DISCO-

VERY OF AMERICA, by which a broad land was opened for civil and religious liberty ;— all occurred within the lifetime of a single man.

The providence of God was signally displayed in preserving North America comparatively free from inhabitants, while the principal regions of the other hemisphere were, at a very early period, filled with vast hordes of strong, barbarous, impetuous men. From the valley of the Nile, the shores of the Mediterranean, Central Asia, Central and Northern Europe, have issued forth an almost unbroken succession of warriors, filling the Eastern world with devastation and death. When America was peopled, as is supposed, from Asia, the tide of emigration passed chiefly down the western coast, and accumulated in the southern portion of the continent. The “sons of the forest,” who made their way west of the Mississippi, were, in comparison with the extent of the region, few in number,—in Virginia, about one to the

square mile;* and, although warlike, they rushed not on in impetuous masses, marched not in the phalanx or the legion, but threaded their way in "Indian file." Their mode of warfare, consequently, had horrors and perils peculiar to itself, yet it was the only mode which the colonists were at all able to encounter. If they had been attacked by dense masses, they must have been overwhelmed at once.

When Columbus reached the New World, it was at the Bahamas, not at the Delaware or the Chesapeake. The cry of the Spaniards being for gold, the natives pointed them to the *south*, not to the *north*; this ensured the establishment of their empire to be characterized by blood, popery, and despotic sway, over Mexico and South America. Afterwards, their determined and repeated efforts to advance northward were driven back, and St. Augustine remained their outpost on the eastern coast of North America.

* Bancroft.

The French gained a foothold only on the north-eastern portion; and, when they advanced into the interior, they went down the Mississippi, and established themselves at the south-west.

Thus was North America reserved almost unbroken by European colonies, until the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Republican institutions were the necessary result of the circumstances in which the colonists were placed, combined with the principles which they professed.

The providence of God led them hither in associations formed on substantially equal terms, and pledging mutual advantages.

Common dangers and sufferings, common wants and pursuits, exerted from the beginning a powerful influence in uniting the people together, and insured a strong infusion of republican feeling in whatever form of government might be adopted.

Their removal to a great distance, and with an ocean between them and their former

home, released them, in a measure, from royal control, and enabled them, in many important respects, to act according to their own choice.

In general, only such persons came to America as loved liberty well enough to brave the ocean and live in a wilderness in order that they might obtain it. They would therefore choose popular institutions. "If," said William Penn, "we could not assure people of an easy, free, and safe government, both with respect to their spiritual and worldly prosperity; that is, an uninterrupted liberty of conscience, and an inviolable possession of their civil rights and freedoms, by a just and wise government, a mere wilderness would be no encouragement."

The general distribution of land to the original settlers, and the facility with which it might subsequently be acquired, furnished a broad and secure foundation for republican institutions.

Such being the general causes which com-

bined to establish republicanism in America, we have now to inquire into the *share of influence which the Bible exerted in producing those causes.*

The love and pursuit of liberty which prompted and sustained the settlements were, in a great measure, owing to the Scriptures. These, as we have seen, had been widely diffused and zealously taught throughout England, and had aroused, enlarged, and enlightened the public mind. Hence, they even, who came to America in the hope of increasing their worldly prosperity,—which was probably the fact with the first body of Virginia settlers,—were strongly imbued with the love of liberty, and had imbibed it partly, at least, from the Bible.

The settlement of New England must be ascribed entirely to the influence of the Scriptures. A determination to secure for themselves and their descendants a pure and free worship of God, according to the directions of his revealed word, was the motive which

brought the Pilgrim Fathers to America. "Their enterprise began from God. A solemn fast was held. 'Let us seek from God,' said they, 'a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance.' 'I charge you before God,' (said their minister,) 'that you follow me no farther than you have seen me follow the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord has more truth yet to break forth out of his holy word.'"*

With similar views, other settlers followed, "in order to form in the New World Protestant institutions, to countervail the Jesuit establishments already existing there, and to embrace for themselves and their brethren the secure asylum which had been furnished by the hand of Divine providence itself." This motive continued to be the prevailing one in the settlement of the other New England colonies.

Having been impelled to America by the principles of the Bible, they persevered after their arrival in adhering to it as their guide.

* Bancroft.

The English Bible, translated under the auspices of King James, had been published only a few years before their embarkation. This coincidence we cannot refrain from regarding as one of the links in the remarkable chain of God's providence over America. By it a version, eminently fitted to be national and permanent, was provided just at the juncture when a colony, distinguished for attachment to the Scriptures, were about to give character for ever to the Western World.

This Bible was diffused more and more widely; it has filled the land, and is to this day adopted by all Protestant denominations as a standard version, subject always to appeal unto the original Scriptures. From the beginning, it was read by the people free from restraint imposed by king or magistrate. It became the family Bible, was expounded and preached in the churches, and taught in the schools. Thus it exerted a forming influence on the characters and opinions of the people.

It was also openly acknowledged by the original Puritans as at once the rule for private life and the guide for civil government. The latter portion of their opinion has often been held up to ridicule; but, if it be understood with reference to the principles established by the Scriptures, as distinguished from particular details recorded by them, time has proved it to be correct.

While the germs of American institutions were planted at the beginning, they cannot be regarded as fully developed until the adoption of the federal Constitution. Bearing this in mind, we may take notice of some marked resemblances between the principles involved in them, and those asserted in the New Testament.

1. The New Testament, as we have shown in a former chapter, maintains that religion is of right independent of the civil power.

This doctrine was not, at first, generally understood even by those who fled to America in order to escape persecution. In Vir-

ginia, the church of England was established by law, and the supremacy of the king over it maintained. The Puritans came to New England to secure the undisturbed maintenance of their own religious opinions—in which, at the time, they were unanimous—but they were unwilling to admit those of contrary views to live among them. They made the church the state. This plan led to the banishment of many persons on account of their religious opinions, and even to the death of a few. The law, however, which ordained the last-mentioned horrible punishment, must be regarded as only the last gasp of the persecuting doctrines which had drawn their life from Europe, and which could not live in America. It was carried by a majority of one vote, and after sentence under it had been pronounced the fourth time, public opinion rose against it, and it was enforced no more. When Maryland was settled, Lord Baltimore, a Roman Catholic, who had, however, been brought up a Protestant, granted

toleration to all Christian denominations. We honour this as being in advance of the age, and nobly opposed to the spirit which ecclesiastical despotism had diffused through Europe. But while Lord Baltimore is fairly entitled to gratitude, as being, perhaps, the very first Roman Catholic who approximated to the true Protestant, scriptural doctrine concerning religious liberty; still, the *right* of the civil magistrate to interfere in religious matters was asserted and maintained by the first laws of Maryland. While toleration was granted to all Christians, blasphemy against the Christian religion was declared to be punishable with death, and minor degrees of disrespect towards it, with slighter penalties.* In 1631, three years before the Maryland colony was planted, Roger Williams—a young minister, thirty years of age, and who afterwards joined the Baptist denomination—arrived at Boston, and advanced the ever-memorable proposition, that *the civil*

* Bancroft.

magistrate has no right to restrain or direct the consciences of men, and that any thing short of unlimited toleration for all religious systems is lamentably contrary to the teaching of Jesus Christ. This sentiment procured his banishment from Massachusetts, and drove him without shelter into the forest. Having obtained land from the Indians, he named his settlement PROVIDENCE. “At a time when Germany was the battle-field for all Europe, in the implacable wars of religion; when even Holland was bleeding with the anger of vengeful factions; when France was still to go through the fearful struggle with bigotry; when England was gasping under the despotism of intolerance, more than forty years before William Penn became an American proprietary, Roger Williams asserted the great doctrine of intellectual liberty. He was the first person in modern Christendom to assert, in its plenitude, the doctrine of the liberty of conscience, the equality of opinions before the law. He was willing to leave

truth alone in her own panoply of light, believing that if, in the ancient feud between truth and error, the employment of force could be entirely abrogated, truth would have much the best of the bargain.”*

From that time his doctrine, one of the first principles announced by Christ, and one of the last to be understood by his disciples, took deep root in America. Afterwards, at the settlement of Pennsylvania, William Penn, a member of the Society of Friends, also fully guaranteed the rights of conscience. And at length, by an amendment to the federal Constitution, it was ordained, that *Congress should make no law respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.* Thus was the independence of religion declared to be a fundamental principle in American institutions.

2. According to the New Testament, believers have the right to associate together as a church, having officers elected by them-

* Bancroft.

selves, and being essentially independent of all other churches, except as they see proper to enter into alliance with them.

So, in America, citizens are associated into communities, having their own officers, and being independent of all others, except as they have voluntarily united with others, and have thus taken upon themselves obligations, express or implied. The first American republic was formed in the *May Flower*, on the ocean, after the colonists had discovered that they were out of the limits of their patent, and consequently had not even its imaginary authority for taking possession of the land. They signed a written constitution of government—subject, as they thought, to the English crown; declared themselves a body politic; resolved to enact laws, and elected a governor to serve for a year.

The first representative assembly was convened in Virginia, in 1619; and fifteen years after, a similar body met in Massachusetts. Thus early did popular representation become

“epidemic in America.” After other colonies had been founded in New England, their common interests soon bound them together in a union which was the germ of American confederation. When British oppression threatened all the American colonies, Massachusetts proposed that a congress of deputies should meet. The proposition was favourably received, and deputies from nine colonies assembled at New York. When the ministry persisted in their measures, Massachusetts again called on her sister colonies, requesting their united aid. When the Port Bill was passed, they rallied in her defence. Virginia appointed a day of fasting and prayer, and proposed that a general congress should again assemble. Massachusetts quickly responded, by appointing her delegates, and naming the day. The other colonies also assented, and the Continental Congress met at Philadelphia, thereby constituting a union of the colonies.

In May, 1775, (according to evidence which

appears satisfactory,)* the citizens of Mecklenburg county, North Carolina—a community of mingled Scotch and Irish descent, and of Presbyterian views concerning doctrine and government—passed resolutions “dissolving the political bands which had connected them with the mother country, absolving themselves from all allegiance to the British crown, declaring themselves a free and independent people, and pledging to each other in support of their declaration, their mutual co-operation, their lives, their fortunes and their most sacred honour.”

These resolutions are fairly entitled to rank among the earliest public expressions in favour of independence, and evidently furnished some of the noblest clauses in the immortal Declaration, written by Jefferson, adopted by Congress, and published on the Fourth of July, 1776.

While the public mind was excited by the

* See “The Presbyterian,” from Feb. to April, 1849.

discussions which resulted in the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Paine addressed a tract, entitled *Common Sense*, to the American people, strongly urging them to the adoption of such a measure. One of his prominent arguments was drawn from the opposition of the Scriptures to monarchical government, as evinced in the Jewish commonwealth, and in the protest which the prophet Samuel entered, by divine command, against the popular determination to have a king. Thus, while the public sentiment of the American people had been, to a great extent, formed under the influence of confidence in the Bible as the word of God, let it never be forgotten that the author of the Age of Reason resorted to the same Scriptures for those political arguments by which he exerted an influence in favour of liberty.

The union established by the appointment of the Congress was strengthened by the "Articles of Confederation;" and finally was perfected—we hope, perpetuated—by the

people of the United States ordaining and establishing THE CONSTITUTION.

It has been asked—In what mind did the glorious idea originate, of ONE NATION, to be formed out of the independent sovereignties which were scattered over the country? There is, we think, no answer to this question. As well might we ask—In what instant was the oak matured? The idea of American unity was coeval with the founding of the colonies. It grew with their growth, and strengthened with their strength. But we may point to a precisely similar doctrine—“One formed of many”—inculcated by the founder of Christianity, and developed throughout the New Testament. We know that it was constantly presented to the readers of the Scriptures, and was cherished deeply in the hearts of many who laid the foundations of our institutions. How far its influence has entered into the national union, we leave others to judge. A single statement of it will suffice for our purpose. “As

the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. God hath set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. If they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet one body. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”*

3. Again, is it asked—Whence arose the extension of citizenship to emigrants from all countries? We answer—It was promoted by the circumstances under which the colonies were planted; but these alone would not have secured it.

Among the Jews, strangers might attain admission into the commonwealth by embracing Judaism in all its peculiarities; they could also secure a less degree of privilege by a partial conformity. But the main design of the Mosaic dispensation was, to separate the Jews for a time from other nations, that,

* 1 Cor. xii.

eventually, they might be the instruments of blessing to all. Therefore, they were made a peculiar people, dwelling alone. National prejudice, losing sight of the design of their lawgiver, turned this separation into a proud exclusiveness, which often refused common kindness to people of another race and faith.

The Greeks looked upon other nations as barbarians, and allowed them, at best, but an inferior condition among themselves. The Romans adopted a policy, in some respects, more liberal. But the citizenship they granted to people of other countries was inferior to that which they enjoyed themselves; it was bestowed partially, capriciously, in different degrees, and, in general, at the price either of conquest or submission. With reference to the general practice of mankind,

Lands intersected by a narrow frith,
Abhor each other. Mountains interposed,
Make enemies of nations, who had else,
Like kindred drops, been mingled into one.

Whence then arose the American doctrine

of citizenship to the people of all countries who come to make this land their home? We can show a similar doctrine in the New Testament; can it be traced to any other source? “By revelation He made known to me the mystery, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, that the nations should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.” “NOW THEREFORE YE ARE NO MORE STRANGERS AND FOREIGNERS, BUT FELLOW CITIZENS WITH THE SAINTS, AND OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD.”*

4. The American doctrine concerning liberty, asserts it to be the equal right of all mankind. “*We hold these truths to be self-evident,—that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, and that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.*”

Truths—evident indeed; but are they self-evident? As well might we call the lofty

* Eph. ii. and iii. chap.

mountain self-evident, which, having been concealed during a long night, stands out clearly against the sky when the noon-day rays surround it.

A doctrine involving these truths was proclaimed in ancient times ; proclaimed, too, at Athens, yet not by Socrates, or Plato, or Aristotle, but by him who on Mars' Hill preached Jesus and the resurrection. "*God who made the world, and all things therein, giveth to all life, and breath, and all things ; and hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth.*" This doctrine is the corner-stone upon which the whole fabric of the Scriptures is reared. Where else can it be found, or at least by what instrumentality, except that of the Bible, has it been diffused through the public sentiment of the American people ?

CHAPTER VIII.

INFLUENCE OF AMERICA AND OF THE BIBLE UPON
OTHER NATIONS.

THE combined influence of the Scriptures and of liberty is working great changes throughout the world.

Among the crowd of persons running to and fro over the earth, the company who press on with the Scriptures in their hands are not the least active, courageous, and persevering. The cold of Greenland has been endured by the Moravian as well as by the seaman. The missionary is found in advance of the trader upon the Equator. He has been a pioneer among savages and cannibals; among the foremost in exploring unknown regions, and without a rival in the mastery of the varied languages spoken by the nations.

At the present time, in almost every part of the world, missionaries have access to the people for the purpose of teaching them Christianity. In this respect a wonderful change has been effected since the beginning of the present century. When Morrison started for China, he was obliged to take passage from America, because the East India Company would not convey missionaries. When the first American missionary band reached India, they were ordered by the government to return in the vessel which had brought them. Then commenced a series of privations and discussions, which at length reached the Directors in London, and by the argument of one man the question was decided in favour of missions. From that time a change began in the policy of the government. Instead of conniving at and supporting idolatry, for fear that their commercial and political relations would be disturbed, they have become increasingly friendly to the missionary work.

The heathen generally are favourably dis-

posed towards Christian teachers. There are few places where they are not permitted to attempt their work; and for the most part, they dwell in safety and comparative comfort. Schools of all grades and in great numbers are maintained; the Bible is circulated in one hundred and seventy different languages and dialects; hundreds of printing-presses pour forth instruction drawn from it and from the science of Christian nations; and thousands of living preachers proclaim the truth to little companies, to crowded congregations, and to dense masses.

By such instrumentality, employed all over the world, the minds of men are aroused, expanded, and enlightened; their consciences are reached; their condition is improved, and the despotic sway of priest and chief and king is undermined.

To enter upon this topic, as its interest deserves, would carry us far beyond our limits. Let us, therefore, glance at a few prominent

spots, as specimens of the results which are in progress.

1. Thirty years ago, the first company of American missionaries for the Sandwich Islands sailed from Boston. On their arrival, they found that idolatry had been abolished by the king, and that "the isles were waiting for the law." The government was of the most despotic, arbitrary character. The people were the slaves of the chiefs; and both chiefs and people, the slaves of the king. They were degraded by vice, ignorance, and superstition.

The missionaries reduced the language to writing, established schools, erected the printing-press, translated the Bible, preached the gospel, organized republican churches, and taught the arts and comforts of civilized life. Thus the character and condition of the common people were elevated, while the arbitrary power of the chiefs and king was checked and softened. At length a remarkable revolution was achieved. "It was a relinquishment of

despotic power by the few for the good of the many, not as the result of demands by victorious subjects, but an optional change from hereditary absolutism and grinding tyranny to written laws and constitutional freedom. Not a tittle of the fair scroll was dyed in blood, nor did a threat or a blow urge its execution. The principles of freedom and the knowledge of history, pursued at the high school of the American mission, urged on a spirit of inquiry. Every pupil from that school went forth an unfledged patriot, but in book knowledge far in advance of his rulers. The wants of the rising generation were not to be bounded by the habits of the old, and whether against their wills or no, the chiefs were convinced that a change was necessary. This was a critical period. But the whole mental and moral influence of the American Protestant mission—itsself a most democratic body of a most democratic nation—combined with the advice and example of the most intelligent and influential foreigners, operated

to effect a peaceful change, and to direct its movements. It is no injustice to the foreign traders, to attribute this prosperity mainly to missionary efforts. The whole undivided counsels and exertions of the mission have been applied to the spread of Christianity and civilization. How far they have been successful let the result answer. To me it shines like the dawning of the Sun of Righteousness on a blinded race. Even as the oasis engenders life and resuscitates the weary traveller over arid wastes—so these islands, redeemed to civilization, the first, if not the fairest fruits of modern philanthropy, foster the toil-worn voyager.”*

2. From the islands of the sea let us turn towards Africa.

In all past ages, war and captivity, despotism and servitude have pervaded the world.

* Jarves's History of the Sandwich Islands, p. 339—359. See also the entire volume. This testimony is adduced rather than that of missionary narratives, both because of its completeness, and because Mr. Jarves has candidly stated that he went out to the islands with different opinions concerning the value of the missionary effort there.

The Venetians supplied the Saracen slave market with both infidels and Christians. The Anglo-Saxon nobility sold their servants as slaves to foreigners. "Black Moors" were brought from Africa by the Portuguese before the discovery of America. Slave ships visited all the harbours of the Atlantic coast, capturing the Indians and selling them. Not Portugal and Spain only carried on this traffic, but England also. Queen Elizabeth was a slave merchant. English, Scotch, and Irish prisoners were doomed by the government to involuntary servitude in the American colonies before African negroes were carried thither. "At the very time when Virginia became the home of liberty, African slavery also was introduced"—when the good seed was sown, an enemy introduced the tares. "The system was fastened upon the rising institutions of America, not by the consent of the corporation, nor the desires of the emigrants; but as it was introduced by the mercantile avarice of a foreign nation, so it

was subsequently riveted by the policy of England, without regard to the interests or the wishes of the colony.”* “By the peace of Utrecht, England obtained the exclusive privilege of bringing African slaves into Spanish America. Companies were chartered, ships built, and for thirty years England was the active slave merchant of the world. The North American colonists were strenuous in opposing the trade. The Penns endeavoured to abolish slavery and prevent the introduction of negroes into Pennsylvania, but the attempt failed. Oglethorpe excluded slaves from Georgia until the British government ordered their introduction. Virginia persevered in her opposition, ‘but,’ (says Mr. Madison,) ‘the British government constantly checked the efforts of Virginia to put a stop to the infernal traffic.’ South Carolina tried to close her ports against slave ships, but was opposed in like manner. The English aristocracy declared that ‘the colonists should

* Bancroft.

not interfere with a traffic so beneficial to the English nation.' They also said, '*Negroes cannot become republicans; they will be a power in our hands to restrain the unruly colonists.*'"*

British statesmen were no nearer being prophets on this subject than on others connected with American affairs. Instead of slavery being a power to aid them in ruling the colonies, resistance to it was prominent among the influences which accomplished their independence. One of the first acts of the Continental Congress prohibited the introduction of slaves. In the original draft of the Declaration of Independence, Mr. Jefferson had inserted the following clause. "The king of Great Britain has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty, in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable

* McCartney's United States. Walsh's Appeal.

death in their transportation hither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of infidel powers, is the warfare of the Christian king of Great Britain. Determined to keep open a market where men should be bought and sold, he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to restrain this execrable traffic. And that this assemblage of horrors might want no fact of distinguished dye, he is exciting those very people to rise in arms against us, and purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them, by murdering the people upon whom he has obtruded them; thus paying off former crimes against the liberties of one people, by crimes which he urges them to commit against the lives of another."

The government of the United States has never participated in the slave trade, and was the first among the nations to prohibit it. As soon as independence was declared, the gradual emancipation of slaves was begun in different States. Thus the evil has been

eradicated from a portion of the country, while all over the United States a process has been going on without cessation, under the influence of liberty and the Scriptures, by which every chain on every slave has been corroded to its very centre. "Now, that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." "It is not generally known, yet it is nevertheless true, that two-thirds of the people of Virginia are open and undisguised advocates of ridding the State of slavery. We speak understandingly. We have, within the last two years, conversed with more than five hundred slaveholders in the State, and four hundred and fifty of them expressed themselves ready to unite on any general plan to abolish slavery on almost any terms." "Virginia may be put down as no longer reliable on this question. When she goes, the District is free territory. Then Delaware and Maryland will also go, and North Carolina and Kentucky will follow suit. This will surround the extreme South with free

States. When that day comes, and it will not be very long,"*—the people of Missouri, Kentucky, and Tennessee are even now discussing the subject,—the extinction of slavery will be a matter of sight, not of faith. If, therefore, we look at slavery in the United States without reference to its history, it appears as a foul contradiction of the principles upon which American institutions rest. It may also seem, to many, a curse from which there is little prospect of being delivered. But when we trace its history, we see that it is the last lingering among us of a system which, at the settlement of America, was deeply rooted and universally prevalent; we see that American religion and American liberty have resisted it from the beginning; that resistance to it entered largely into the struggle for independence; and that, from the first moment of our national existence, the process of gradual emancipation has been

* Richmond Southerner, quoted in *Colonization Herald*, August, 1848.

going on. The cloud which yet overhangs a portion of the country may appear, in itself, dark and threatening; but when we remember that it is only a fragment of what once overspread the horizon and the world, we may look on with calmness, seeing that it is not an advancing, but a retiring storm, and that the "bow of promise spans it as it flies." Courage, then, Americans! Patience, sympathy, an equal bearing of each other's burdens, and a diligent inculcation of Scripture truth among both masters and servants, are all that is requisite to meet the exigency of the case. Let these be secured, and the first century of your independence—of which a fourth part yet remains—need not be completed without witnessing an entire harmony between its declaration and the liberty which it has actually bestowed. And if this consummation be witnessed, we may ask, without fear concerning the answer—Where else, unless it be in the first century of the Christian era, can an equal work be pointed out

as having been accomplished within a hundred years?

But this is not all. Many of the most gifted Americans, prompted by the principles of the Scriptures, of philanthropy and patriotism, have founded and cherished a colony of free coloured people upon the western coast of Africa—a noble continent, which God has shut up from the whites as signally as he reserved America for them. We need not detail the struggles or the success of the colonization scheme. The story is important, but not long. The gallant captain who negotiated the treaty for the land is yet in vigorous life. Directed, at first, by white men, at the risk and with the frequent sacrifice of life, emigrants, partly educated at the North, and partly trained amidst the institutions of slaveholding States, to independence in their churches, and to a knowledge of republican principles, have, in a quarter of a century from the planting of the American flag on their territory, “assumed among

the powers of the earth that separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them." With their own legislature, judges, and executive; with a constitution modelled after that of the United States; with the independence of religion guarantied, they have unfurled their own flag. Upon it is inscribed—" *The love of liberty brought us here ;*" and this is answered by another banner, floating over the heads of new emigrants leaving the American shore —" *The love of liberty takes us there.*" They have made the star of a tropical sky their emblem among the nations. It will be not their emblem only, but also the harbinger of blessedness and light, of peace and truth for all that land. Already the piratical slaver has disappeared from hundreds of miles of the adjacent sea-coast. "The London Times estimates the expenditure of Great Britain, in the attempt to suppress the slave trade, at three millions sterling annually, for forty years, and the loss of life as exceeding, dur-

ing the same period, all her losses in battle : and to what result? Why, the doubling and trebling the number of slaves who get clear, and an increase of deaths on the passage, owing to the closer stowage, of something like three to one. The American Colonization Society, with an income from voluntary contributions of only a few thousands, can point to far greater success, from their humble efforts, than has resulted from the combined power of English, French, and American navies, sustained at an annual expense of so many millions from the public treasury.”*

3. Our next mount of observation is in the dominions of the Sultan and the city of Constantine.

The roar of battle had ceased at Navarino, and, as the smoke cleared away, Greece was free, and the Turkish power broken for ever. The missionaries from America entered the capital. They translated the Scriptures, conversed concerning the truths of the gospel

* Journal of Commerce.

with all who came to their hired house, preached to the few who ventured attendance, and spread abroad unnumbered pages from Greece to Persia. At length the minds of many were aroused, and their hearts affected. They saw the errors of their church, and refused compliance. Persecution was excited; poverty, reproach, and anathemas were inflicted by the ecclesiastical rulers of the people. This drew forth remonstrance to the government from the ambassadors of Christian nations, and the hand of violence was arrested. The independence of the Protestants, with respect to the authority of the Armenian church, was recognised. A church was formed on the republican model of the New Testament—the first that Constantinople has ever seen; and this has been followed by the formation of others in surrounding regions.

Thus, in twenty years from the arrival of the “Bible-men, that is, the followers of the devil,” (as they were called,) in the city where

the liberty of the Christian churches had been destroyed by imperial usurpation, and where the irruption of the Turks, like the lava of a volcano, had enveloped nominal Christianity; there, through the power of God's word, a republican community, with religious and civil liberty, restricted yet guaranteed, has raised its head from beneath the triple strata of superstition, hierarchical tyranny, and Ottoman power.

And through all those fair but desolated regions, where the gospel was first preached, and to whose inhabitants a large part of the New Testament was first given, the light shall be rekindled on the golden candlesticks, and the truth shall make men free.

4. And now we are standing again amidst those countries of Europe, over which, at the opening of the seventeenth century, storms of war were gathering, and in which the struggle was advancing between truth and error, between liberty and arbitrary power. That the bursting of the storm has been ter-

rific—that the struggle has shaken Europe and the world, there is no need here to say. These things are among the most deeply pondered wonders of modern times. From the destruction of the Spanish armada to the battles of the Nile and of Trafalgar, the roar of the ocean has been mingled with that of the broadside, with the shouts of the victors and the groans of the dying. From the English channel to the Pyramids, from Gibraltar to Moscow, the land has been covered with camps and marshalled hosts, and battlefields and graves.

Amidst all the agencies for evil and for good, which during this period have been at work, the influence of America, as the assertor of liberty and the dispenser of truth, has been added. That influence began, when Columbus first saw the light gleam from her island outpost. It increased when the James River was entered; when the pilgrims landed; when the right angles of the Quaker city were surveyed. It has been exerted with an

unmeasured force, for more than two hundred years; every hour, every moment, upon all classes of men, from the sovereign to the serf. It has been exerted upon government, upon religion, upon literature and science; upon the arts, the comforts, the joys of social life.

While thus perpetual and advancing, it has been manifested at certain great crises with triumphant power. Once, in her early history, when Chatham, and Burke, and Fox, pleaded in her name for the spirit of liberty; when the arguments of the Continental Congress astounded the House of Commons, and when the hand that drew the lightning from the cloud signed the treaty of alliance with European powers. Again, when the French troops, returned from aiding in her struggle for liberty, prepared to assert their own; when the key of the Bastille was sent to Washington, and the liberty of France was first proclaimed. But if proscription followed, if the king and his family, the nobles and multi-

tudes of every rank were murdered, were slaughtered; if terror reigned and anarchy raged in ungovernable fury; if the vision of freedom was trampled down by the iron heel of the despot—blame not America for these results, lay them not to the charge of liberty or of truth; but remember that by the crusade against the Albigenses, by the massacre of St. Bartholomew's day, by the flight of the Huguenots, righteousness and truth had been cut off—leaving France the prey of superstition, senseless, usurping and bloated on the one hand, and of infidelity, of atheism, dark and ferocious on the other.

Look again at the influence of America, combined with truth, when the strength and life, the intellect and piety of the Scottish church, after having struggled against the power of the state since the days of Knox, turn their back upon worldly wealth, renounce the royal supremacy, and proclaim religion free. And do you hear the protest which even now is ringing through the English

establishment, still more enslaved than the Scottish was, because nearer to the throne? That protest will prevail. It appeals to the Scriptures. It is the voice of truth against usurpations, to uphold which there is no longer strength in the sovereign's arm.

Yet once more. Would you understand the influence of America, stand by the side of her ambassador, in Paris, as first, among the nations, he salutes the Republic. Penetrate to the heart of that Austria, whose humblest peasants bow at the name of America. Then may you comprehend why Metternich flies, why the emperor abdicates, and the people of Germany cry out for "Unity amongst many."

See, too, those Romish priests, who, after having long cursed America in their hearts, now with admirable coolness reverse their engine, that they may escape the collision which has crushed kings and diplomatists, and with internal trembling but outward calmness, assure the people that they shall

have institutions exactly like those of America. Trust them not, but watch their course.

Look, most of all amazed, at that man of famous name—Pope Pius the Ninth—hurrying at the desperate game of hiding the scarlet robes of his cardinals with a republican dress, and his own tiara with a liberty cap. But in vain. “He flies!” and the populace, brutalized by the falsehoods and tyranny of which they have been the victims for fifteen centuries, hurl after him their malediction—*“Fly! thou Jove without thunderbolts!—king without crown!—apostle without faith!”*

The stone is wrenched from its deep foundations; the angel poises it in his uplifted hand; the predicted conflict seems to be drawing nigh; and soon the final plunge may be heard, announcing that the great city, which ruled over all the earth, is no more.

And, if liberty be not established in these excited lands, the banishment of the Scrip-

tures, the desecration of the Sabbath, and the general absence of religious restraints from the minds of the people, will sufficiently account for the worst disasters that may be witnessed. On the other hand, among the reasons for encouragement, one is pre-eminent—**THE WORD OF GOD HAS BEEN SET FREE.**

CONCLUSION.

A WORD remains to two classes of those who may have followed the writer on his way.

1. If you profess to have come to Jesus Christ according to his invitation, then, on the supposition that your profession declares the fact concerning you, as God judges it, you have, as individual believers, acquired all the privileges of the gospel: even peace with God, adoption among his children, the guidance of his Spirit, and eternal glory. As associated together in the name of Christ, you have secured for yourselves the fulfilment of his promise—I AM IN THE MIDST OF YOU. This is the firm foundation for all your privileges. It presents a platform on which all must stand who would be members of the church of

Christ, and on which all may stand in subjection to him, but free with respect to each other;—a platform without limit and without inequality, either of elevation or descent.

All have an equal right to adopt their own views of doctrine, according to their judgment of Scripture—the only ultimate source of rule and of right.

All have a right to pray with a book or without one; in their own words or those of another; in language prescribed and stated, or in such as the occasion or their feelings may produce. All have this right equally: not because other ages have or have not employed a particular mode; not because one mode or another is, in itself, more acceptable to God, who, in all cases, regards alike the heart; but because they themselves, in the exercise of that liberty which is their inalienable inheritance, *have chosen their own way.*

All have a right to prescribe, for themselves, rules for seeking and receiving public instruction from the word of God. And

though “it is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching or ministering the sacraments, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same;” yet, “those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent who be chosen and called to this work by *men who have public authority given them in the congregation* to call and send ministers into the Lord’s vineyard.”

All have an equal right to their own officers, chosen by themselves. Here we take our stand with Baxter, when he said—“My Lord, I am accused *for speaking respectfully of bishops;*” nay, we say with Paul—“*If any man desire the office of bishop, he desires a good work.*” With the New Testament in our hands, we maintain that all, in every individual church, who have been chosen by its members as their spiritual guardians, and have been ordained by the laying on of hands, they are THE BISHOPS of that church, by whatever other name or names they may also be called.

All individual churches have the right to associate themselves together on terms of their own adoption, according to their views of Scripture and of expediency. They may establish councils, conventions, conferences, and assemblies, whose acts will be clothed with a greater or less degree of authority over all the association, depending, not on the question whether similar authority has or has not been exercised in other ages, but whether the associating churches have, either immediately or through their chosen representatives, delegated the same.

But, as for all that is imperative in the imposition of liturgies; all that is restrictive in the transmission of "ordaining power" through the imaginary channel of prelatical succession; all that is exclusive in claims over a territorial parish or diocese; all that is monopolizing in the appropriation of church privileges and of covenanted mercies;—let it be remembered that such things have been clothed with authority, not by Christ, or

Peter, or Paul, but by Constantine, by Phocas, by Pepin and Charlemagne, by William of Normandy and Henry the Eighth.

Let it be remembered that the mitre is the satellitè of the crown; the crosier, of the sceptre; the scarlet, of the purple; and that ecclesiastical "thrones" — episcopal, archiepiscopal, patriarchal, and papal—are nothing but the steps around those seats of regal domination, which the prophet looked upon until they were all cast down.

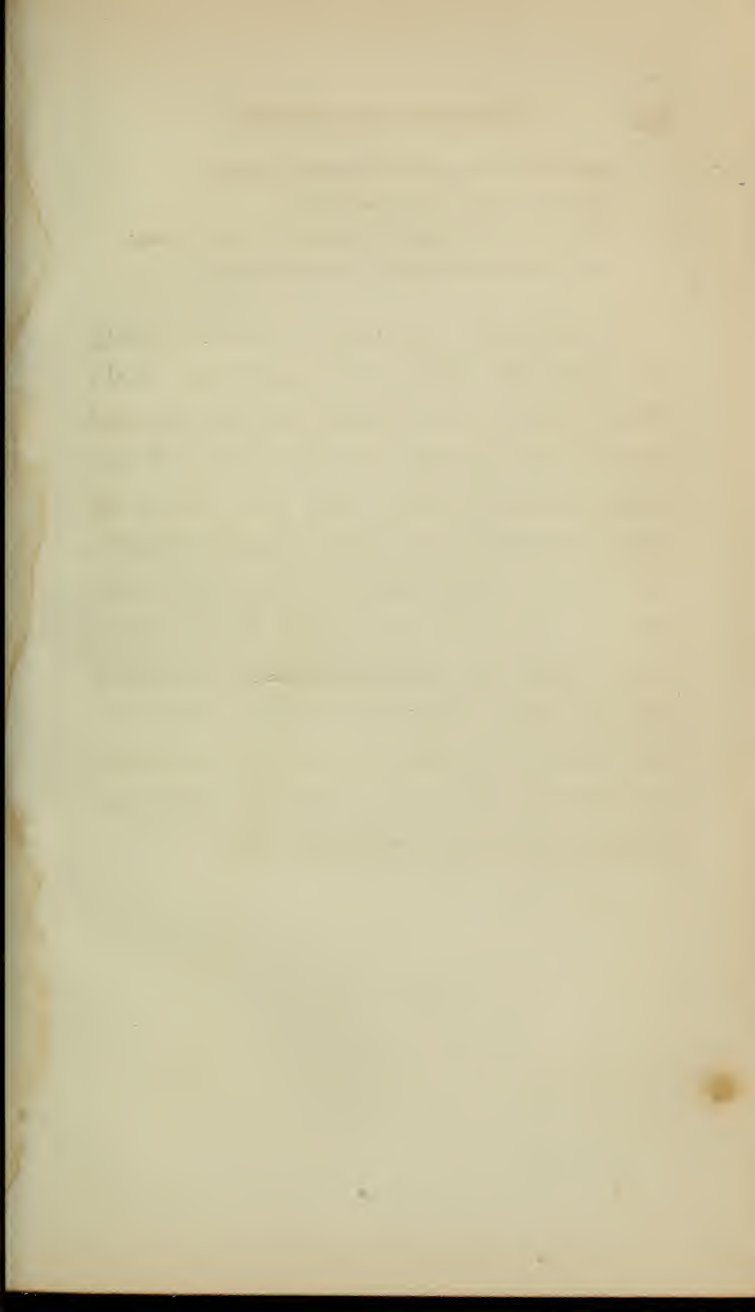
2. And to Americans, whether members of Christian churches or not, the admonition of the most reflective and venerable of living poets may be addressed:—

“ Ungrateful country, if thou e'er forget
 The sons who for thy civil rights have bled;
 * * * * * *
 But these had fallen for profitless regret,
 Had not thy holy church her champions bred,
 And claims from other worlds inspired
 The star of liberty to rise. Nor yet,
 (Grave this within thy heart,) if spiritual things
 Be lost, through apathy, or scorn, or fear,

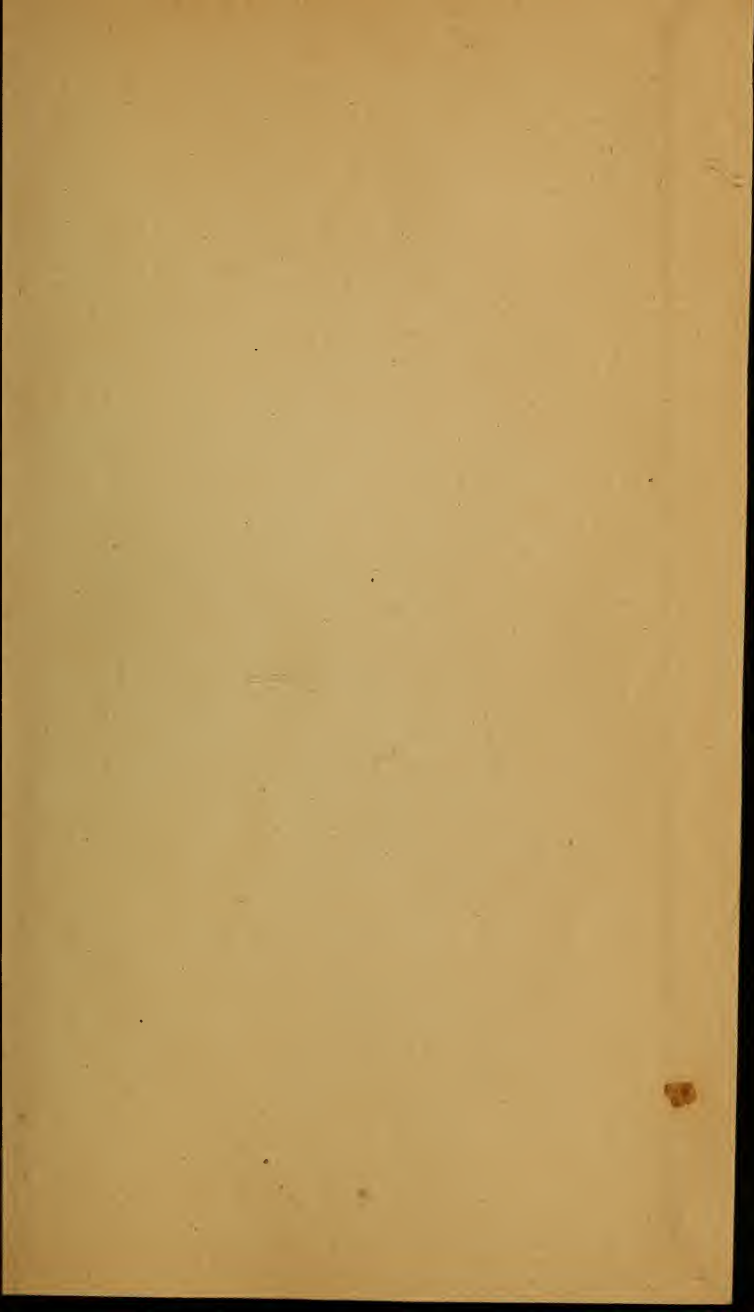
Shalt thou thy humbler franchises support,
However hardly won or justly dear ;
What came from heaven, to heaven by nature clings,
And, if dissever'd thence, its course is short."

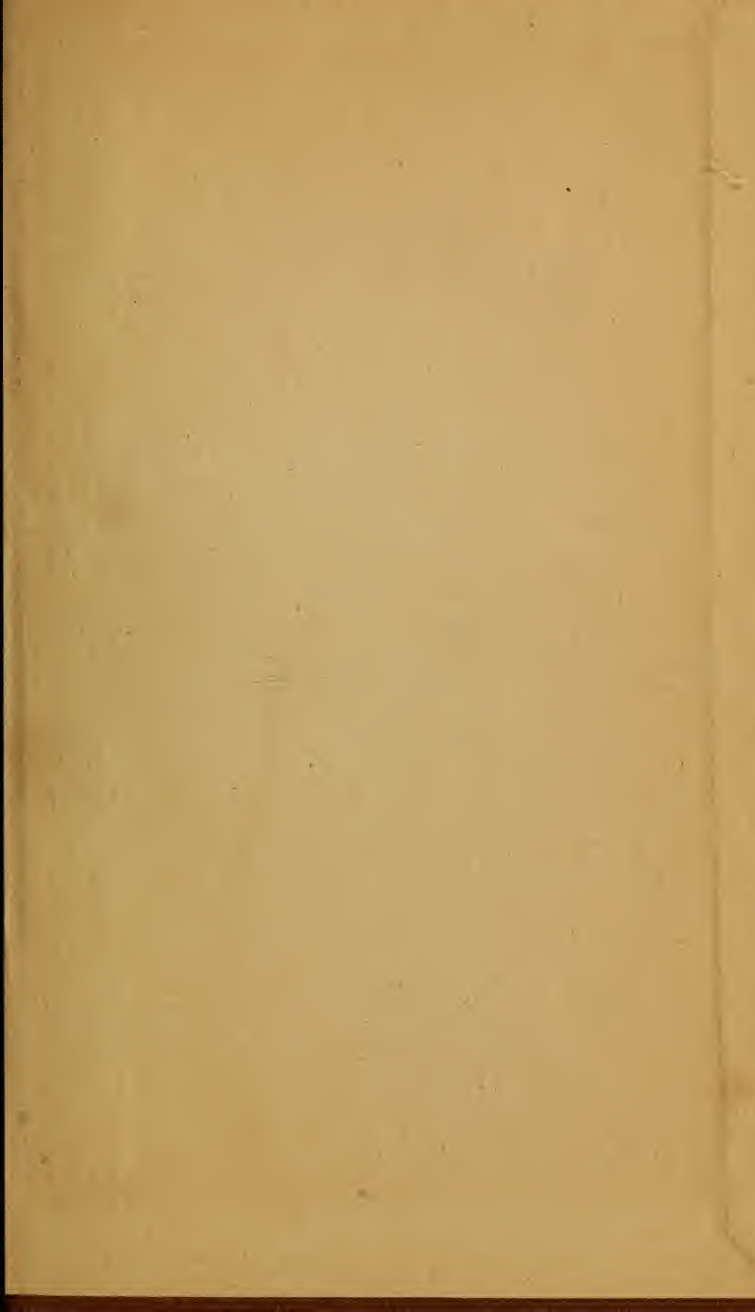
If you would construct a vessel to carry you over the ocean, you must take God's oaks, which he has planted for your use, and rocked into strength by his storms; if you would rear an edifice that will endure for ages, you must take God's granite from the hills where he has placed it: so, if you would pass in safety over the sea of life, or rear a moral fabric for personal, social, or political use, you *must* take God's TRUTH, which he has caused to spring up upon earth, stouter in heart than the oaks of Bashan, and more enduring than the everlasting hills.

THE END.



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